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THE

SECRET HISTORY

OF THE

COURT OF BERLIN.

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THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE COURT OF BERLIN;

OR,

THE CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT KING OF PRUSSIA, HIS MINISTERS, MISTRESSES, GENERALS, COURTIERS, FAVOURITES, AND THE ROYAL FAMILY OF PRUSSIA.

With numerous Anecdotes of the Potentates of Europe, eſpecially of the late Frederic II. and an intereſting Picture of the ſtate of Politics, particularly in Pruſſia, Ruſſia, Germany, and Holland.

In a Series of Letters, tranſlated from the French.

A POSTHUMOUS WORK.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A MEMORIAL, preſented to the preſent King of Pruſſia, on the Day of his Acceſſion to the Throne,

By COUNT MIRABEAU.

VOL. II.

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THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE COURT OF BERLIN.

LETTER XLIII.

November 4th, 1786.

A NEW letter, exceſſively rigorous and tolerably incoherent, has ſuſpended Launay in the exerciſe of all his functions. Yet I ſcarcely can believe it is intended to ſully the beginning of a reign by uſeleſs cruelty. The victim is immolated to the nation the moment the man is no longer in place. The remainder would only be the exploſion of gratuitous hatred, ſince the unfortunate Launay no longer can give umbrage to any one. Verder is placed at the head of the cuſtoms. We ſhall ſee what the new eſtabliſhed order will produce; or rather whether they will know how to eſtabliſh any new order. In the mean time the diſcharge of forty Frenchmen is determined on, *in petto*. But I cannot perceive that theſe kind of Sicilian veſpers are likely even to gain the public favour. The theatre here is not ſufficiently vaſt to conceal from the pit what is paſſing behind the ſcenes. There is ſcarcely any illuſion poſſible, except that of actually doing good. I ſhall endeavour to ſave Launay, by cauſing Prince Henry to ſay, who has at leaſt preſerved the privilege of uttering all he pleaſes, that hitherto the King has really acted in this buſineſs as the man of the nation; but that, ſhould he go farther, he will become the man of the perſecutors of Launay; that there are public murmurs which affirm he has eſpouſed their hatred, &c. Certain it is that the repetition of the ſelf-important *I*, in Launay's eſtimate, has put the King out of humour, and even in a paſſion.

His Majeſty arrived yeſterday, and returned this morning. This ſeems to be an epiſode in the romance of Voſs, which approaches the denouement, and which is ſuſpended to obtain the three following articles—Two hundred thouſand crowns for her portion. The King refuſes—(or will only count out a thouſand crowns per month, ſo that the payment will not be completed in leſs than ſixteen years and eight months, which will render the ſum a little problematic) A left-handed marriage—(To this he conſents, but the lady finds that a very equivocal kind of circumſtance) or to marry her to a man who ſhall depart on the bridal day, as ambaſſador to Sweden—(There is no certainty of finding a man ſufficiently baſe, in that claſs which ſhould rank him among ambaſſadors) Miſs avows that, without being amorous, ſhe is rendered exceedingly ſenſible by a three year's ſiege —But what ſhall become of her?—Of her uncle?—Her family? What place ſhall ſhe hold in the public opinion; in city, and court? Such is the purport of the negociation conducted by Biſhopſwerder. I do not ſuppoſe him young enough to be the King's ſubſtitute; ſo that the ſpeculation does not appear to be very certain.

As to the King, there is indeed ſome little curioſity, a degree of obſtinacy, and ſomewhat of vanity, but ſtill greater want of a companion, with whom he may be as much of a goſſip, may loll, and dreſs as ſlovenly as he pleaſes. The circumſtance that ſhackles the negociation is that Rietz and her tribe muſt evacuate the country, and the King is exceedingly attached to her ſon. It is neceſſary however to add to all this that Mademoiſelle Voſs relates herſelf all the tales repeated in public, and even of the moſt ſecret courtiers, which concern herſelf; and this may render the probability of theſe conjectures ſuſpicious.

The King it is ſaid returns to Potſdam till the 8th. He is not there ſo entirely occupied by buſineſs, or ſecret pleaſure, as to exclude all company. Mr. Arnim is one of his ſociety; a kind of unfiniſhed man of the world, who has acquired many friends by the affability and amenity of his manners and his great fortune, and whoſe underſtanding, ſufficiently upright and little brilliant, being timid and wavering, neither gives umbrage to the King nor inſpires him with fears. In all deſpotic countries, one grand means of good fortune is mediocrity of talents. If it be generally true that no poſitive aſſertions ought to be made in the preſence of princes, and that heſitation and deliberation always pleaſe them, I think it peculiarly ſo applied to Frederic William II.

It is affirmed the aſſignments are made out, and that this has been the labour of Welner alone. For this reaſon all the miniſters, Schulembourg excepted (perhaps becauſe of his connections with Count Finkenſtein, whom the inauguration of Mademoiſelle Voſs muſt render powerful), are reſtleſs and terrified. Some of them have not yet given in the leaſt account to the King. Eſtimate by this the ſtate of a country in which every thing depends on the induſtry of the King. Be not aſtoniſhed that ſo little mention is made of buſineſs, for no buſineſs is tranſacted: the affair of Launay is the only one which is purſued with activity and hatred; every thing elſe ſlumbers.

A perſon who comes from Ruſſia aſſures me that the Empreſs has long omitted going any more to the ſenate, and that ſhe habitually intoxicates herſelf, every morning, with Champaigne and Hungary wine; (this is contradictory to every account I have hitherto received.) That Potemkin elevates his ambition to the grandeſt projects, and that it is openly affirmed he will either be made emperor or be beheaded, at the acceſſion of the Grand Duke. This artful and deciſive man, poſſeſſed of uncommon fortitude, has not a ſingle friend; and yet, the number of his creatures and creditors, who with him would loſe their all, is ſo great in every claſs of the people, that his party is extremely formidable. He amaſſes immenſe treaſures, in a country where every thing is venal. Accuſtomed never to pay his debts, and diſpoſing of every thing in Ruſſia, he does not find any difficulty in accumulating enormous ſums. He has an apartment, the key of which he keeps himſelf, partitioned out from top to bottom, and divided into a great number of boxes, filled with bank bills of Ruſſia, Denmark, and particularly of Holland and England. A perſon in his employment propoſed the purchaſe of a library to him, appertaining to a great lord that had lately died. Potemkin took him into his bank bill apartment, where the only anſwer he made was aſking whether he imagined this library was of equal value with the one propoſed. Poſſeſſed of ſuch pecuniary aid, he has no need of any other to perform whatever he ſhall dare to undertake, at Peterſburg.

I muſt here mention that Doctor Rogerſon, who yeſterday departed on his return to Peterſburg, affirms that no perſon in Europe leads a more ſober and regular life than Catherine II. He however has been eight months abſent.

I have collected ſome particulars that are rather curious, relative to the uſurpation made on the ducal rights of poſtage in Courland, of which I have ſpoken to you in my former diſpatches. This is an object of ſome importance, in ſo ſmall a ſtate; independent of the inquiſition that thence reſults, and of the infraction of the rights of nations. This branch of revenue does not annually amount to leſs than a hundred and ſixty thouſand livres. But the following is a ſingular circumſtance, which characterizes Ruſſian politics.

Not to commit an act of violence too openly, and to avoid marching troops, which always draws the attention of neighbouring powers, the court of Ruſſia propoſed, or rather demanded, an amical conference between the deputies of Courland and commiſſaries, named to that effect; and appointed their ſittings to be at Riga, a Ruſſian fortreſs on the frontiers of Courland, under the preſidency of the governor of that town. Four deputies from Courland repaired thither, at the time appointed; and the governor ſignified to them that he had received orders, from his ſovereign, to arreſt them, if they did not ſign an act, which he produced ready drawn up, by which the ducal rights of the poſtage of Courland were transferred to Ruſſia. The deputies, ſhould they refuſe, having no other proſpect before their eyes but Siberia, purely and ſimply affixed their ſignatures: after this ſeveral ſtipulations, which alienated leſſer rights and even portions of the borders of Courland, were in like manner preſented and ſanctioned. One of the moſt artful, and the moſt important, of theſe ſtipulations is that which relates to reclaiming the ſubjects of Ruſſia, who may be found in Courland, and in which the cabinet of Peterſburg have included the very deſcendants of thoſe who may have been naturalized for ages. It is very evident that this conceſſion leads to unlimited abuſe, and innumerable

able diſputes, which will be more injurious to Courland than the moſt burthenſome tax could be; for nothing can prevent the Ruſſian ſuperintendants from feigning, whenever they pleaſe, the exiſtence of one or of ſeveral of ſuch, or ſuch Ruſſian ſubjects, in ſuch or ſuch a part of Courland, or from taking the refuſal of reſtitution for granted, in order to lay the country under the contribution of an equal number of hundreds of ducats (the ſum fixed by the ſtipulation for each Muſcovite whom the Courlanders ſhall refuſe to deliver up) whenever the Ruſſian treaſury, or the Ruſſian delegate, ſhall ſtand in need of, or whenever the country ſhall be enabled to pay, ſuch ſums of money. I again repeat that ſimilar practices, openly in Courland, in other parts more ſecretly, ſimilar projects I ſay are carried on, in all the countries that border upon Ruſſia. Let us return to Berlin.

Trumpel, the groom whom I mentioned to you in my laſt, is diſcharged. This exertion has excited much aſtoniſhment.

The King certainly rouſes himſelf as much as he can, that he may not be governed, and this is the moſt diſtinct act of ſelf-will which has hitherto been diſcernible in the Monarch.

On Thurſday evening he ſupped at the confidential table, at which there are no ſervants, but the gueſts are ſupplied by *Tours*(*a*). The ſupper was more than gay. Ten perſons were preſent. When it was over, the ladies of honour were viſited, one after the other.

Prince Henry, who has this week given grand dinners to the civil and military officers of the court, a thing he never did before, ſupped on Monday with the reigning queen and her whole court. This proves nothing, except a deſire to keep up the appearance of politeneſs. I forgot to ſay that he is to give a dinner to morrow, to all the ſubalterns of the

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(*a*) Dumb waiters, or rather a kind of machinery, of French invention, made to aſcend through the floor, or paſs through apertures in the wall, that the unobſerved gueſts may indulge in the moſt deteſtable licentiouſneſs. T.

regiment of Braun. This is gratuitous and ridiculous affectation, and will never make his peace with the army, by which he is truly deſpiſed.

Baron Bagge, after refuſing to pay any viſits here, even thoſe that common decorum required, ſaying that, according to the manner in which he had lived with the heir apparent, it was for the King to ſend him an invitation, yeſterday received this invitation to Potſdam. The incident proves that muſic ſtill is a paſſion.

That infamous C** has written to Chauvier, affirming that he knew, paſt all diſpute, it was to him he was indebted for the obligation of not being permitted to ſee the King; that he was going into a country in which he ſhould find it eaſy to injure; and that he would uſe every exertion to effect his ruin; excluſive of the means with which he had been furniſhed by Chauvier himſelf. Chauvier has acted with propriety, and laid the letter before the King.

The nocturnal jaunts continue. I ſtill remain ignorant of the object of the grand motions toward Auſtria, and reciprocally.

LETTER. XLIV.

November 7th, 1786.

THE King himſelf has interfered to produce a reconciliation, between Biſhopſwerder and Goltz the Tartar. Peace for the preſent therefore is concluded; and the more firmly becauſe that war, open and avowed, is hotly carried on between the firſt favourite and Count Goertz. There has been great difficulty in preventing them coming to blows. What may be argued of a king for whom they thus openly contend? Probably a regiment will be given to Goertz, to ſend him out of the way; but the payment of his debts is the difficulty; for it appears that the laſt thing the King will part with is money. The treatment of the aides de camp is at length determined on. Biſhopſwerder has two thouſand crowns; Goltz the Tartar and Bowlet each ſeventeen hundred. The head groom Lindenau alſo has two thouſand crowns, with eight places of forage, which may be eſtimated at ſix hundred crowns, and fire and candle.—Behold how the ſandy plains of Brandenburg, with the aid of Sileſia be it underſtood, are capable of maintaining an army of two hundred thouſand men.

The thermometer of buſineſs remains ſtill at the ſame fixed point. There is no riddance of letters: one chamber is full of packets, that remain unopened. The ſtate miniſter Zedlis has not been able to obtain an anſwer to his reports for more than three weeks. Every thing is in arrear. Yet the mode of living at Potſdam appears to have been tolerably well regulated, though Madam Rietz has been there. The lateſt hour that the King has riſen at has been ſix o'clock. The Prince of Deſſau has never ſeen him before half paſt twelve, and perhaps not half an hour each day, dinner time excepted. It is at ſupper that the women make their appearance, and that wrinkled cares are diſcarded.

Welner has not quitted Potſdam, and

two men are continually writing in his apartment. Hitherto he may be regarded as the monarch of domeſtic affairs. That he is neither deficient in talents nor information is a point undiſputed; and the eternal diſorder of the accounts, added to ſuſpicion of the financiers in power, muſt have impelled the King to have abandoned himſelf wholly to Welner, whoſe obſcurity is his recommendation.

I ſay the *eternal diſorder*; becauſe that in effect Frederic William I. with whom all domeſtic regulations originated, and in which no alterations were made by his ſon, kept no general and exact accounts; and acted thus ſyſtematically. Being acquainted himſelf with the whole of his affairs, as he would not ſuffer any one of his miniſters to divine what the ſtate of them was, he made out imperfect, overcharged, and falſe accounts. Frederic II. who never underſtood any thing of finance, but who very well knew that money is the baſis of all power, confined his views to the amaſſing of large ſums; and he was ſo certain that his ſavings were enormous that he was ſatisfied with partial accounts. Such an interpretation is certainly more probable, in my opinion, than the imputation of having burnt the general ſtate of debtor and creditor, with the malicious intention of embarraſſing his ſucceſſor. The preſent King wiſhes for order, and he has reaſon ſo to do; but it is an Augean ſtable, and I ſee no Hercules; at leaſt among thoſe by whom he intends to be ſerved.

Count Finckenſtein has written in very warm terms to the King, to inform him that the provocations of Count Hertzberg are ſo frequent that they are become inſupportable; and that his great age and his laſt illneſs made him ſincerely deſirous of retreat. The King returned a very mild anſwer, very obliging, and what may be called apologetic; in which he earneſtly requeſted him to remain in office, and promiſed that the cauſe of his complaints ſhould ceaſe. He promiſed perhaps more than he can perform. Men of the moſt oppoſite tempers ſerved together under Frederic II. and this is one of the characteriſtic traits of his reign. But it is no ſmall preſumption to imitate his manner: it cannot be expected that ſuch imitation ſhould ſucceed: for, in ſpite of the ſervility of the country, liberties are taken that were not permitted under the late King, of whom the world ſpoke very freely, but with whom no perſon was familiar. The very academicians now make encroachments. Three new members have been propoſed; one Boden an aſtronomer; one Meierotto, the rector of a college; and one Ancillon, a miniſter of the holy Goſpel. Admirable choice! The King teſtified his ſurpriſe with aſperity, at this unuſual propoſition, made without its being even known whether he did or did not intend to increaſe the number of academicians. The indiſcretion will probably occaſion ſome regulation. He has however ſigned a large YES to the propoſal for I know not what Druid of the name of Erman, author of a multitude of vile ſermons, and a refugee hiſtory, of which four volumes are already written, that might be reduced to thirty pages; and who has been propoſed by the curator only, Count Hertzberg, without the queſtion having been put to the vote.

The Boden of Paris ſeems to be forgotten, or worſe. The King was told that he had written three letters to his Majeſty without having received any anſwer——"I have no anſwer to give; "the fellow came here without orders (*b*)." Such was the royal deciſion! The King returns to morrow for a few days. He has been ſo accuſtomed to run from place to place, and to make only a momentary ſtay, that the habit ſeems to have become one of his wants. M. de H*** wrote to him, three days ago, to know when he might take his leave, but has received no anſwer.

The grand dinner of Prince Henry to the regiment of Braun was given yeſterday, as I before wrote. All the officers

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(*c*) *C'eſt un f—u coquin, qui eſt venu ſans ordre.* There is no tranſlating the St. Giles's eloquence of this phraſe. T.

and forty ſubalterns, who had ſerved under him at the battle of Prague, ſat at the Prince's table. He gave a medal worth fifteen ducats to each officer, a ducat to each ſubaltern, and a crown to each private. It would be difficult to be more aukwardly oſtentatious. Had there been any need to have farther injured himſelf in the King's opinion, he could not have found a better method; but this was compleatly done before, and it muſt be well known too, for Rogerſon, who had often viſited Prince Henry during his two journies into Ruſſia, has not been to pay him his reſpects. The King gave him an audience it is ſaid, but only for a few moments.

I do not at this inſtant recollect the name of the perſon who is arrived from Vienna, and who at the King's table was very pleaſant at the Emperor's expence, which occaſioned a coolneſs in the King and ſome gloomineſs, ſo as to denote marks of diſapprobation; ſilent, but ſtrong.

The new ribbands are preparing.

Moral coin ſeems to coſt the King leaſt. Never was the remark of Frederick II. to Pritwitz more true than at preſent. The latter complained that the ribband had been beſtowed on Braun before himſelf—"My ribband," ſaid the King, "is like "ſaving grace—It may be given, cannot "be merited."

Count Arnim has been appointed maſter of the hounds and a miniſter of ſtate, with a vote and a ſeat in the grand directory. In one of my former diſpatches, I have ſpoken of him circumſtantially. This is a pure choice of favour (and is the more marked becauſe that the place of maſter of the hounds, taken from Schulemburg, had continually been ſolicited by Colonel Stein, who was rather in the King's good graces), but of favour founded as I imagine merely on the pleaſure taken in the company of Arnim, who is irreproachable in mind and manners. It is only another perſon of incapacity added to the miniſtry. ———

Rotten before ripe. Such I greatly fear will be the motto of the Pruſſian power.

But their millions are good. It will therefore be of uſe to remit new propoſitions for a loan, if it be really intended to erect a bank; as all packets, gazettes, and private letters affirm, ſo that myſelf excepted every body is informed of the project; for in my opinion theſe would be of more importance than the loan of a hundred and twenty five millions, which the bank apparently will be able to borrow on its own credit. Struenſee, who doubtleſs will be glad of this occaſion of rendering himſelf uſeful to the King, has in plain terms aſked what he is to think of the diſorder of the Caiſſe d'Eſcompte; of the letter of the Comptroller General to his adminiſtrators; of the project of a bank; of its approaching realiſation; of the principles on which it is to be eſtabliſhed; and eſpecially what kind of directors ſhall have the management. He thinks the plan good, but is convinced that every thing depends on thoſe who ſhall have the direction. To all theſe queſtions, as you muſt be ſenſible, I know not what to reply:

yet it is requiſite I ſhould ſoon know, becauſe that, not to mention that any negociation of this kind cannot ſucceed here except by his aid, for not one of the others underſtand any thing of ſuch affairs, he has a right to interrogate me, ſince I made the firſt advances.

LETTER XLV.

November 20th, 1786.

UNFORTUNATELY, I cannot be blind to what is here daily confirmed, by traits which are each more pitiable than the other, concerning the opinion that I have ſo long forborne to take of the man and of affairs.

The King has juſt beſtowed the ribband of the black eagle on Anhalt. This gentleman is the ſon of a cook-maid, and of a multitude of fathers. He was originally a groom; he next ſold ſmuggled coffee to the officers. I know not by what means he became what he is, but I know that his principal function was that of a ſpy. He was afterwards placed in the ſervice of the preſent King, while Prince of Pruſſia; and, as he mingled poiſonous advice and odious tales, *they* deſtined him, as it is ſaid (and the word *they* is in this caſe the moſt bitter of the enemies of the late King) to execute a crime which *they* neither had the addreſs to colour nor the courage to conſummate. Anhalt poſſeſſes more military talents than his native folly could promiſe. His warlike vocation ſeems to be remarkable, by this ſingular characteriſtic, that he never poſſeſſes coolneſs, except when heading his men. He has arrived, whether by theſe or other means, at the rank of lieutenant general. As he is without underſtanding (the little he had he was deprived of by a dreadful fall, for which he was obliged to be trepanned) he continued in favour. He was deteſted at Konigſberg, where he commanded, and this was a kind of recommendation to him at Potſdam, where the kingdom endured forty-ſix years of diſgrace (*c*).

Some days before the King's death, general Anhalt was ſent for to Sans Souci —"You have lately married one of your "daughters" ſaid the King—"Yes, Sire, "I feel I have"—"How much did you

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(*c*) By the kingdom Pruſſia Royal is meant, for which province the late King had a fixed averſion. T.

"give with her?"——"Ten thouſand "crowns"——"That is a large ſum, for "you who have nothing."——On the morrow they were ſent him by the King, Anhalt returned into Pruſſia. His benefactor died, he beheaded his portrait, and ſubſtituted the head of his ſucceſſor. The new King repairs to Konigſberg to receive homage, and beſtows a ſuperb box on Anhalt; but indeed gives him notice he muſt quit the government of Pruſſia. In two months time, that is to ſay at preſent, Anhalt, being at an auction ſome days ſince, and ſeeing a portrait of the late King ſold at a low price, very coolly ſaid,—"Right, I'll give you the other (*d*) "into the bargain"·····He retires with a penſion of five thouſand crowns, a ribband, and a promiſe of being employed in war. This proſtitution of reward, apparently extorted from weakneſs, is endeavoured to be excuſed, by alleging the fear that Anhalt ſhould paſs into the ſervice of the Emperor, as

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(*d*) Meaning the preſent King. T.

he threatened in the following ſpeech, which does not want dignity.---"If you "refuſe me this favour I muſt then go "elſewhere, and prove that it is not be"cauſe of my want of merit." I do not think this a ſufficient reaſon, for the eſtates he had purchaſed near Magdeburg were a ſufficient pledge for his perſon.

Be this as it may, and however ſingular the choice may appear, which has made a ſtrong impreſſion upon the public, it muſt be allowed that Anhalt is a great commander, an officer worth preſerving, and that ſome recompenſe was due to him for the loſs of his government of Pruſſia, with which, mad as he was, and often furious, he could not be entruſted.

But none of theſe reaſons can be alleged in behalf of Manſtein, a ſimple captain, a common and even ignorant officer, but a devout myſtic; who, without any pretext, has been ſent for and is deſtined, as it is ſaid, to be the governor of the young Princes, with the title of lieutenant colonel. To thoſe who look into futurity, this is fearful. The whole army is offended. Indeed it is probably not true; but the very ſuſpicion ſpeaks the public opinion.

A ſingularity which has not excited leſs murmuring is that Heynitz, miniſter of ſtate for the department of the mines, is placed at the head of the commiſſion againſt Wertenberg, a kind of diſagreeable man who has long had the clothing of the troops; a ſubaltern knave, and perhaps nothing more; or perhaps leſs ſo than his predeceſſors. This ſpecies of inquiſition, which appears to be the adopted method, and which will not eaſily be made familiar to the people, whom it will be difficult to perſuade that the late King was negligent and a bad œconomiſt,---this ſpecies of inquiſition I ſay, ſeems to indicate ſuſpicions of the commanding officers, ſince the direction of ſuch trials is taken from theſe officers, to whom they entirely appertained. There are great complaints, and ſtill greater contempt. This muſt be an ill ſymptom, eſpecially after a reign of only two months.

Indolence, and ſtagnation, its neceſſary reſult, continue to be felt. In conſequence of not having the letters ſent after him as was the cuſtom of Frederic II. the King is prodigiouſly in arrear. He found thouſands on his return from Sileſia, his journey through which is a ſtriking contraſt to the incredible activity of the late King; who however did not devote more time, or rather who devoted leſs, than another to his trade of King. He only ſet apart an hour and a half each day on ordinary occaſions for this purpoſe; but he never put off the buſineſs of the preſent day to the morrow. He knew, ſo well was he acquainted with man, that a bad reply was better than none. A heap of memorials and projects are on the table of the preſent King, moſt of which relate to military changes, on which he has never caſt his eyes, and which have been productive of nothing, except of his vehement averſion for memorials. He regards them as a tax on his ſovereign authority; and ſuppoſes advice of any kind to be an avowal of an opinion of his incapacity. Among the uſeleſs writings which have been remitted to him, there is ſaid to be a memorial from Baron Knyphauſen, on foreign politics. There are indications which lead me to believe it is favourable to our ſyſtem, and this has given him particular diſpleaſure; its fate therefore was to be thrown aſide, without heſitation, as the reveries of dotage. The Baron however has diſowned to me that he is the author of this memorial.

To the ſame ſenſation, apparently, which makes him ſo much deteſt advice, we muſt attribute the following ſingularity. Welner has only had a ſtipend of three thouſand crowns, deducted from the penſions formerly paid to the head officers of the commercial departments, the ſmalleſt of which penſions only is granted him, ſo that he is but the equal of thoſe who have leaſt influence, and have not the ſame induſtry. As the few preparations which are made are all made by him, his labour muſt be very great. A ſingle ſtatement of the money accounts is ſaid to have given him much trouble. At preſent, the exceedings of the receipts over the expenditure, at leaſt the civil, are known. The ſum is greater than was ſuppoſed by near one quarter, which is much. It is imagined that the chief part of this ſurplus will be applied to increaſe the pay of ſubalterns. Private ſoldiers undoubtedly deſerve no greater honour than that of dying with hunger. But I ſcarcely can believe they will dare to offend the corps of the captains.

If the King give but little, to thoſe who ſeem to be his greateſt favourites, there yet are indications that he beſtows ſecret largeſſes; or that he has ſecret reaſons for conferring ſuch on ſome perſons. The chamberlain Doernberg, an inſignificant perſon in my opinion, who quitted the ſervice of the Princeſs Amelia with ingratitude, ſhe having paid his debts, to enter into that of the Queen, has twice within five days had his ſalary conſiderably augmented. At preſent he has two thouſand crowns as chamberlain, a ſum hitherto unheard of. What does this denote? Have they at length determined on the ſcheme of marrying Mademoiſelle Voſs? Have they caſt their eyes on this fortunate mortal, who reſembles a baboon? Do they intend inſenſibly to make his fortune? A captain in the Gendarmes ſaid to me yeſterday—"Since royal "munificence is ſo amply ſhowered on "Doernberg, I for my part expect an "annual gratification of fifty thouſand "crowns." This muſt be either an affair of myſticiſm, pimping, or marriage. But, if the laſt, why make ſo ridiculous a choice? What courtier is there who would refuſe Mademoiſelle Voſs, with plenty of money? I did them too much honour in ſuppoſing ſuch were to be found, in this Vandalian court. Not in places where men are accuſtomed to walk double will any be found who ſhall ſtand erect, when ſuch temptations are thrown in their way. Beſides, what cannot money effect, in a nation ſo poor? I not long ſince ſaw Brederic, late laquais to Prince Henry, become a kind of favourite, becauſe of his art as a *Chamber Counſellor*, and oſtentatiouſly diſplay the croſs and ribband of a canonry of Magdeburg (Prince Henry is provoſt of this chapter). Seven thouſand crowns, lent by the Prince, have purchaſed the ſtall; and the Prince's well-beloved groom bears the ſacred inſignia, in a country where there is ſo much delicacy pretended on the article of birth.

A-propos of his patron. — For a week paſt I have not heard this muſical Prince mentioned, the height and depth of whoſe thermometer are the greateſt that ever fell under my obſervation. The Count of Brandenburg requeſted permiſſion of him to be preſent at the banquet he gave to that part of the regiment of Braun who fought under him at Prague. The Prince granted the child permiſſion; and, after having highly careſſed him, ſaid—"It is difficult my little friend to "converſe with you here, but aſk your "father leave to come to my palace, and "I ſhall be very glad to ſee you." Thus artful are his politics. He muſt employ a quantity of ſuch ſtratagems to reimburſe himſelf for his grand dinners. One of his table-confidents and admirers ſaid to me the other day—"Is it not very "ſingular that the Prince is ſo little "eſteemed after all that he has done "for the army?"—And he meant by this to criminate the army! It appeared to me a notable ſpeech.

The anecdote reſpecting the academy is ſtill more curious than according to the manner in which I related it in my laſt. The academician Schutz has written a very violent letter to the King, againſt Count Hertzberg, and concerning the arbitrary manner in which he governs the academy. The King ſent the letter to Hertzberg, a marked token of diſapprobation in this country. Buſching the geographer on the ſame day refuſed a ſeat in the academy, unleſs a penſion ſhould be granted him of a thouſand crowns. The only anſwer given to the complaints of Schutz was the nomination of Erman, by Hertzberg, without conſulting any perſon; and the King ſigned his YES, without objecting to this nomination.

Schutz wrote another letter, ſtill more violent; what the conſequences were I do not know.

The diſgrace of Launay is not ſo mild as it appears. It is openly avowed that government only waits till he has furniſhed Sileſia with coffee, and that then he is to be diſplaced. He very raſhly undertook this contract, which he has bargained with traders to fulfil, who are emboldened by his downfal to diſown or break their engagements at the moment when, all the navigable canals being frozen, there are ſuch few means of repairing ſo great a deficiency. But the truth is the commiſſion is ſuſpended, becauſe that they are ſecretly ſending, through different parts of the kingdom, in ſearch of proofs; a truly cruel and tyrannical inquiſition, which ſhows they are rather deſirous of the guilt of Launay than of the public benefit.

A man named Duboſc, formerly an eminent merchant at Leipſic, where if I do not miſtake he failed, and well known for his viſionary adherence to

myſticiſm,

myſticiſm, has been ſent for, and is at preſent employed, as is ſuppoſed, to give in a plan of commercial regulations, as a ſubſtitute for excluſive privileges. It ſhould ſeem they meditate a ſally againſt the Splittgerbers (*e*), and that means are ſeeking to deprive them of the monopoly of ſugar: a very juſt and ſalutary, but a very difficult and delicate act.

An article of intelligence ſtill more important is that Baron Knyphauſen has had a ſecret converſation with the King: but, though it comes from a good quarter, I will not warrant it to be true. Not that this would much aſtoniſh me. I know paſt doubt that the King, enraged at being obliged to ſend Count Goertz to Holland, at the very moment when the houſe of Orange itſelf complains of this ambaſſador, wiſhed, after venting a torrent of paſſion and abuſe, to recall both Goertz and Thulemeyer; but that he

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(*e*) Splittgerber is a ſugar-baker at Berlin, who has for many years enjoyed a monopoly of that commodity.

was ſtopt ſhort, becauſe of the impoſſibility of finding a *man* in a country where there are none; and particularly none fit for ambaſſadors, a part of adminiſtration that was highly neglected by the late King. His ſucceſſor perhaps will be taught that fools are not good for any one purpoſe.

P. S. Nothing new ſince I wrote this long letter. Various particulars aſſure me that the Princeſs Frederica, the daughter of the King, gains great influence, and never meets with any refuſal. This doubtleſs appertains to the hiſtory of Voſs.

LETTER XLVI.

*To the Duke de L * * *.*

November 12*th*, 1786.

I Flattered myſelf that M. de H * * * would bring me a packet from your Grace. He informed me you had intended to entruſt him with one, and I am exceedingly grateful for the intention, although I have not profited by it; this I attribute to unforeſeen circumſtances, which, while I pray for you, have my hearty maledictions.

I hope that the Abbe de P * * * * has ſent you the news of the country, concerning which I have not neglected occaſionally to remit anecdotes, tolerably characteriſtic of the moment. I feel the poverty of my own harveſt more forcibly than any perſon; but it ought not to be forgotten that I am neither provided with the pecuniary nor the miniſterial means.

It is impoſſible any thing ſhould eſcape the man of France (*f*) if he be adroit, active, liberal, and has the art to invite proper gueſts to his *daily* dinners and ſuppers; for theſe are the efficacious means, and not *public* dinners. He is beſide a kind of regiſter office, to which all the diſcontented, the babblers, and the covetous reſort. Beſide that his intercourſe with ſubalterns is natural to him, and permitted. I on the contrary have need of great art and circumſpection, in order to ſpeak without offence or intruſion on public affairs. I rarely can addreſs my diſcourſe to perſons in power. My very aſpect terrifies them too much. The King never deigns to look at me but their countenances lengthen and grow pale. I have acted however to the beſt of my abilities, and as I believe done all I could with means that are very mutilated, very ungracious, and very ſterile: nor can I tell whether the perſon on whom the

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(*f*) The author undoubtedly means the ambaſſador. T.

King beſtows a ſalary of ſixty thouſand livres, and a poſt of honour here, ſends much more information than I do. But I well know that I, under the ſame circumſtances, would have penetrated many clouds through which, ſtationed as I am, I have very dark views; and that I would not diſcredit my nation, as he is accuſed of doing, by his haughty behaviour, his bitter-ſweet aſpect, and idleneſs that greatly reſembles ignorance.

M. de H * * * will more fully relate, as I ſuppoſe, the particulars I have ſent. He will tell you our cauſe is a loſt one here, unleſs a change ſhould take place among the judges; that the way to re-eſtabliſh our affairs is not to be over haſty; ſince this would but prolong reſiſtance, among men naturally phlegmatic, and whoſe phlegm we may ſafely conclude will not ſuffer them to continue long impaſſioned; that he himſelf was too haſty to come to a country which, at the beginning of the preſent reign when each is looking for advancement, is too reſtleſs and jealous to ſuppoſe that a general officer and an inſpector in the ſervice of France could really wiſh to be in the ſervice of Pruſſia; that the chaos (for ſo affairs at preſent may well be called) muſt be ſuffered to ſubſide, and from the nature of things acquire conſiſtency (if on the contrary it ſhould not ſuffer deſtruction), though it be but the conſiſtency of apathy, before attempts ſhould be made to interfere; that no perſon is at preſent firmly placed; that the grand queſtion—"Will the King or will he not have the "courage to take a firſt miniſter?"—is far from being reſolved, even by the calculation of probabilities; that on this determination however the fate of the country depends, and even the ultimate capacity of the King, whoſe inability will be of little import if this remedy ſhould be found to be a ſubſtitute for his indeciſion; that the ſymptoms are vexatious, and indeed diſagreeable, but that we muſt not pronounce too haſtily, becauſe our information is the reverſe of complete.

It appears to me indubitable that Prince

Henry is ruined paſt reſource; and I fear (in his behalf) that, on this occaſion as on many others, chance has arranged affairs better than our precaution. But, whether or no, his cunning, his boaſting, his inconſiſtency, the intemperance of his tongue, and the vileneſs of his creatures, ſeconded by the moſt univerſal diſcredit, have added to perſonal antipathy, and the general and habitual fear of appearing to be governed.

The deſtiny of the Duke of Brunſwick is far otherwiſe uncertain; nor do I believe it will be decided before there is an open rupture. But it is peculiar to him, and to him alone, that, ſhould he once graſp power, it will not afterward eſcape him; for a better courtier, a man of deeper views, more ſubtile, and at the ſame time more firm, and more pertinacious, does not exiſt.

You may well imagine, my Lord, that, if I ſuppoſe facts are too partial and hitherto not ſufficiently numerous to be reduced to ſyſtem, on which conjectures may be formed reſpecting the King and politics, I am ſtill much farther from thinking I can, with any appearance of probability ſatisfactory for a wiſe man, divine what will be the grand foreign connections, and political influence of Pruſſia, under the preſent reign. I have ſketched my ideas on the ſubject in a memorial, which is a work of labour; but which (except the proofs the country affords, and which here, as I imagine, will be found united, and compared, more accurately than any where elſe) is only a ſucceſſion of conjectures. It contains many things which may, and perhaps not one of which will, happen. I am fortunate if, in this calculation of the arithmetic of chances, I have ſo far ſucceeded as to deſcribe things as they are, and as they may be. From this memorial accompanied by three or four others, on parts of Germany which lucky chance has given me opportunities of perfectly knowing, a plan my be formed, according to which the Germanic edifice may be reconſtructed, a work that ought to be begun, if its ruin is not deſired. And here I confeſs the indeciſion of man, the complication of incidents, and the obſcurity of future contingencies, arreſt me at each ſtep; and I have no other guide than what is offered by your grand and noble project of coalition, between France and England, the end of which is to give happineſs to the world, and not afford amuſement to orators and news-writers.

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M. de H* * * has informed me that your Grace intends coming hither in the ſpring. This certainly would be the only means of rendering my ſtay here ſupportable. But I hope you will not ſo long be left in inactivity ſo unworthy of your talents. As to myſelf, after having paid a tribute of ſix months, during which I have the ſatisfaction conviction gives of having employed uncommon aſſiduity and reſearch, in compenſation for the want of natural talents; I think I have a right to ſhake off an equivocal and doubtful exiſtence, every way embarraſſing, requiring dexterity and fortitude ſeldom found to preſerve perſonal reſpect, and in which I conſume my time and my ſtrength in a ſpecies of labour that has no charms for me, or in the languor of etiquette and company ſtill worſe than this labour. Of this I have informed the Abbe de P.* * * in expreſs terms.

LETTER XLVII.

November 24*th*, 1786.

THE moſt diſtreſſing incident poſſible has juſt happened to me. It is a very extraordinary ſtory. Madam de F * * the famous *Tribade* (*g*), coming from the waters of Schwalback, has dropped here as if from the clouds, under a borrowed name, with an immenſe train, and not a ſingle letter of recommendation, except to bankers. Can you imagine what project this profoundly audacious and indeed capable woman has entertained?—The conqueſt of the King!—And as, in puniſhment for my ſins, I have known her long, and well, the damnable Syren has addreſſed herſelf to me, to lay down a chart of the country for her; and, in return, receive, as a depoſit, that high confidence which I ſhould moſt willingly

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(*g*) A woman-lover. T.

have bequeathed to Beelzebub. However, as ſhe is a dæmon of ſeduction, as ſhe does not aſk for money, at leaſt not at preſent, and as her qualities of body and mind in many reſpects correſpond with thoſe of the Monarch, if this be not an opportunity to be ſought after neither is it one to reject. Beſide, as the deſign is begun, and as it will be better to undertake the direction than be expoſed to ridiculous broils, I am at preſent in ſearch of means to afford her a decent pretence of remaining here a fortnight; taking care to draw my ſtake, or rather taking care not to put it down.

If the Count d'Eſt ** were not in every reſpect one and the ſame, the affair might preſently be managed.—She might be going to Peterſburgh, through Warſaw; waiting here 'till ſhe could travel in a ſledge, which from the ſetting in of the froſt cannot be long firſt; might give a few ſelect ſuppers; excite curioſity, &c. &c.—But this mode is not to be depended on; it is too ſubtile for his underſtanding.

Were not Prince Henry indiſcretion itſelf nothing could be more eaſy than by his aid to introduce her to the court. She might have brought him letters. But in an hour's time the aid-de-camp Tauenſien would be informed of every thing; as would his Aunt, Madam Knibbeck, in five minutes afterward; and her I ſuſpect to be the go-between of Mademoiſelle Voſs—We muſt depend on our own reſources. I ſhall take care not to entangle myſelf; though indeed her very firſt ſtep has entangled me. It is a kind of fatality; and how might I eſcape?

I have made many reflections on this odd adventure. Our plan muſt be not to abandon our purpoſe, and not to be too ſcrupulous concerning the means. The few we have are in truth impracticable.

If ſhe remain in her preſent ſituation there will be no means of ſeeing the King. The myſtics, the Voſs party, and the Anti-French in general, will all be her enemies.—If ſhe conceal her intentions, ſhe will be oppoſed by the party of the

Rietz, and the ſubalterns. Either I muſt often viſit her, which will render her ſuſpected, or I muſt not, and ſhe will conduct herſelf improperly.

If this partake of the adventurer, I voluntarily engroſs the blame.

Nothing can be done in haſte, with a German Prince. Should her ſtay be long, that ſtay will of itſelf divulge the ſecret.

It is not poſſible but that, in a week, her true name muſt be known. The reputation ſhe has acquired will then ſpoil every thing, in a country where ſeductive qualities will not excuſe vice, and where a trip is not the leſs a trip becauſe made by a woman.

The follies moſt inexcuſable are thoſe which expoſe to ridicule without compenſation; of the number of which this is one.—D'Eſt * * will relate his trifling tales; Boden his trifling ſcandal; Tauenſien propagate his trifling intrigues: before appearance, it will be neceſſary to let the crowd go by, who will come and endeavour---I will therefore ſend her to

Warſaw, and procure her letters. She may return with other letters, if you do not inform me by what means ſhe may be prevented, ſhould ſuch be your wiſh: for, though I can delay, how may I forbid her return? Such I have thought the leaſt hazardous proceeding in this fantaſtic farce, which I with good reaſon think of greater importance than you may be tempted to do, becauſe that at Paris Madam de F * * is, like many others, little more than a courtezan: while here, the niece of an ambaſſador and the widow of a P * * * G * * *, &c. will never be ſuppoſed not to have been ſent by government; or at leaſt not to have come hither under its protection. She therefore muſt not be ſuffered to commit any great folly.

The King has lately terminated a ſuit which had been in conteſt for three and twenty years. The Duke of Mecklenburg Schwerin formerly borrowed a hundred thouſand crowns of Frederic II. and gave ſome bailliages (or diſtricts) as a ſecurity. Hither Frederic immediately ſent a regiment of huſſars into quarters. The regiment, as you may well ſuppoſe, raiſed recruits. The people of Mecklenburg were ſhocked by this act of deſpotiſm, and offered to repay the late King; who, during twenty-three years, always found pretences to avoid receiving the money. His ſucceſſor has withdrawn the troops. It is true he loſes an opportunity of enliſting ſome of the country people; but he will annually ſave thirty thouſand crowns; and there is likewiſe a new member gained for the Germanic confederation; and what that might be valued at this is worth.

On Sunday (the 12th) at the principal inn in Berlin, the marriage of the Counteſs Matuſka and a Pruſſian officer, named Stutheren, was celebrated. The Counteſs is a ſiſter of Mademoiſelle Hencke (Madam Rietz). She thought to have married a Poliſh gentlemen, who ſome months ſince withdrew. Once deceived, ſhe next made choice of a young officer. The King has given money, and money enough. It is ſuppoſed that

Mademoiſelle Hencke, who now is ſaid not to be married to Rietz, will retire and live with her ſiſter; that ſhe may not impede the projects formed to enjoy the maid of honour in peace.

There are whiſperings of a very remarkable and very ſecret ſupper, at which the ſhade of Cæſar was taken. The number of myſtics increaſes. They affirm that the credit of Biſhopſwerder declines. I do not believe a word of it.

No new act of finance. Depoſitions againſt poor Launay are poured in, and in all probability his fortune muſt purchaſe his freedom.

Nothing new, or at leaſt nothing certain, from Holland; except that Count Goertz has found the way to diſpleaſe the States, the Houſe of Orange, and the principal perſons who are enumerated among the French faction. I well know what a philoſopher would deduce from this: the politician will perceive there are commiſſions the diſcharge of which he never ought to undertake.

LETTER XLVIII.

November 18*th*, 1786.

IT is every day more apparent that the King does not forget thoſe who were attached to him before his acceſſion to the throne; and this propenſity, which is ſucceſſively developed, proves him at leaſt an honeſt man. Count Alexander Wartenſleben, an officer in the guards, whom I have ſeveral times mentioned, had been educated with him. Hence that intimacy which will not admit of ſecrets. The late King ſent for Wartenſleben, and ſaid to him—“ I am pleaſed “ to ſee you ſo very intimate with my “ nephew: continue your friendſhip. “ But it is alſo neceſſary you ſhould ſerve “ the ſtate. I ought to be informed of “ the proceedings of my ſucceſſor. *Mein* “ *liebes kind*(*b*), you will come and let me

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(*b*) My good child. T.

"know what paſſes at your parties of "pleaſure. I ſhall not forbid them. I "ſhall only warn you when there is any "danger; and of this you yourſelf will "inform the Prince of Pruſſia. Depend "upon me, *mein ſchatz* (i)."---Wartenſleben, who knew the old fox, replied---"That he was the friend of the Prince; "the friend of his heart, and that he "would never become his ſpy."---The King then aſſumed his furious countenance---"*Herr Lieutenans* (k), ſince you will "not ſerve me, I will at leaſt take care "that you ſhall obey."---On the morrow he was ſent to Spandau, where he was impriſoned three months, and after that ordered to a garriſon regiment, in the very farther part of Pruſſia (l). On the new King's acceſſion he was recalled. After a momentary diſpleaſure, which Wartenſleben's ſleben's refuſal to go to Sweden occaſioned, and which perhaps was the contrivance of the other favourites, the King has beſtowed a prebendary on him, the income of which is valued at twelve thouſand crowns; and according to all appearance intends to give him the command of the guards.

(i) This correſponds very well with the Iriſh phraſe, *my jewel*; or, *my honey*. T.

(k) Mr. Lieutenant. T.

(l) This was a mode of puniſhment with the late King, and a very diſagreeable one to the ſufferers; for, beſide confinement, little pay, and no hopes of preferment, it was a public mark of contempt. T.

The following is a ſecond example of a like kind. When the ſuit was carried on againſt the miniſter Goern, who was ſuperintendant of the College of Commerce, among his papers was a bill on the Heir Apparent for thirty thouſand crowns. The money muſt be procured within twenty-four hours. Arnim went in ſearch of the Prince, and offered him the ſum, which was moſt joyfully accepted. This probably is the origin of the favour which the new miniſter enjoys; I cannot conjecture any other, except what may be deduced from the King's eaſineſs of character, his indeciſion and mediocrity of mind; which however is juſt and clear, as I have ſaid in my former diſpatches.

The King has done a third humane and generous act. His firſt wife, the Princeſs Elizabeth of Brunſwic (*m*), has received an increaſe of allowance, conſiſting of the revenues of the bailliage of Ziganitz, which amount to twelve thouſand crowns, with liberty to retire whereever ſhe pleaſes. Certain of not being received by her family, ſhe will remain at Stettin. But the news has tranſported her with joy. She has publicly declared that the lady of General Schwerin, her gouvernante, has no more right to give her any orders; and, for the firſt time theſe eighteen years, ſhe took an airing on horſeback with Mademoiſelle Plates, that ſhe might immediately enjoy that liberty to which ſhe was reſtored.

A trait which we ought to add, in proof of the King's morals, is his having given up the letters to Prince Henry, which paſſed in his correſpondence with Frederic. Their number amounts to five hundred

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(*m*) Divorced, baniſhed the court, and confined at Stettin, for her incontinence. T.

hundred and eighty-ſeven, on ſtate affairs, from the year 1759 to the year 1786. It had been unſeaſonably reported that the Prince was privately of his brother's opinion, concerning their nephew. Theſe letters however have proved that he did not wiſh it ſhould be known. He even rendered him ſervices; and, for example, when Count Wartenſleben, of whom I have juſt ſpoken, was impriſoned, he ſent him a grant of a penſion of a hundred a year which he ſtill enjoys.

The famous chamber huſſar, Schoening, the confidential man of the deceaſed King, has lately been appointed aſſiſtant to the caſhier of the military cheſt, with a ſalary of three thouſand crowns. This certainly is not a rancorous act. Schoening indeed is not a man without intelligence; and he is the depoſitary of numerous ſecrets, which ought not at preſent to be made public, perhaps never.

In oppoſition to all theſe good actions, we muſt place the apathy of the King, on the ſubject of his perſonal debts. He is in no haſte to pay thoſe that are not of the houſehold, and there is a very conſiderable ſum appertaining to the latter which remains unſettled.

It is determined that the King is to diſcharge all the perſons employed as tax-gatherers on the French finance ſyſtem, which in itſelf is a laudable act: for, were there a neceſſity for ſome years to prolong the farming of the cuſtoms, yet, either the French collectors already have or never will have taught the Germans the mode of tranſacting the buſineſs. And is not the Pruſſian Monarch the king of Germans? But innovation is a very delicate thing; and I ſee no preparations made to leſſen the ſhock that muſt be received. The farmers of tobacco and ſnuff have been informed that their adminiſtration muſt ceaſe on the 1ſt of June, 1787. All perſons thenceforward will be allowed to cultivate tobacco, and to make and ſell ſnuff. This is a very important object; for the tobacco that grows on theſe barren ſands is ſome of the beſt in Germany, and formerly was a very conſiderable branch of trade.

On the 1ſt of July grants are to be delivered, gratis, to whoever ſhall make the requiſition. (Nay freedom is promiſed for coffee too.) From 1783 to 1786, the duties on ſnuff and tobacco had yielded about ſixteen hundred thouſand livres more than the ſum they had been eſtimated at by the King; ſo that theſe formed a revenue of ſomething more than a million of crowns, and ſometimes a million four hundred thouſand; amounting from about a hundred and ſeventy to two hundred thouſand pounds ſterling. Yet the collectors had not the right of buying the leaf tobacco; they were obliged to purchaſe it from the warehouſes of the maritime company, by whom it was ſold at a profit of cent per cent. Theſe collectors committed infinite vexations, on the ſubject, to obtain a ſurplus, with which it was neceſſary to come before the King, when they delivered in their accounts; otherwiſe he could neither find wiſdom in their proceedings nor talents in themſelves. The King leaves the collectors their ſalaries, till they can be provided for, and this is humane; for the change will affect not leſs than twelve hundred families. But how will they find a ſubſtitute for this revenue? A capitation tax is ſpoken of, and is certainly under deliberation. The ſubjects are to be compriſed in twelve claſſes: the rich merchants are to pay twenty-four crowns; the rich inhabitants twelve crowns; two crowns for obſcure citizens; and the peaſants ſomething leſs than two ſhillings. What a manner of beginning a reign it is to tax perſons before property! In the collection of this odious tax, which ſets a price on the right of exiſtence, the tobacco exciſemen are to be employed. The capitation however is ſomewhat ſoftened, by being paid by the family, and not by the head. But the proſelytes to, and even the apoſtles of, this project do not eſtimate the tax at more than two millions of crowns, annually; which ſum is the product of tobacco and coffee united, but which ſcarcely will ſupply the deficiency: and thoſe who underſtand calculation; in finance, will be careful not to eſtimate a tax equally productive in figures and in reality. I am ſurpriſed that he does not firſt gain a better knowledge of ſubſtitutes; and that he ſhould begin by operations which I have pointed out as things to prepare, and ſhould defer thoſe with which I thought he ought to commence (*n*).

Heinitz, miniſter for the department of the mines, and preſident of the commiſſion commanded to examine the adminiſtration of general Wartenberg, warned no doubt by univerſal clamor, has remonſtrated to the King that it is requiſite to add ſome military men to the commiſſioners. His Majeſty has in conſequence appointed General Moellendorf.

To give a ſpecimen of the malverſations attributed to the Jew Wartenberg, which it is ſaid were highly ſurpaſſed by his predeceſſors, the following trait is cited. He made up clothing, for a regiment of foot, without having milled the cloth.

(*n*) The Author doubtleſs alludes to his memorial, which will be found at the end of this volume. T.

cloth. The coats were ſo tight that they ſcarcely would button on the men. The firſt day they were worn by the regiment there happened a heavy ſhower. The quarter-maſter ſaid that, if the ſoldiers pulled off their regimentals, they never could put them on again; accordingly they were commanded to lie all night in their clothes, and dry them upon their backs.

The next is an example of another kind, and characteriſtic of Frederic II. One of the caſh-keepers of Wartenberg ſtole eighty thouſand crowns. The general informed the King, and waited his commands. Frederic replied he had nothing to ſay to the matter, for he was for his own part determined not to loſe the money. Wartenberg underſtood this jargon, aſſembled all the army clothiers, and requeſted they would divide the loſs, under pain of being no more employed. The clothiers cried, curſed, lamented their wretched deſtiny, and ſubſcribed. Wartenberg wrote to the King that the money was again in the military cheſt. Frederic ſent a very ſevere anſwer, and concluded his letter by telling him---“ This “ was the laſt time he ſhould be par- “ doned.”

Private anecdotes continue much the ſame. The general report is that the King is to eſpouſe Mademoiſelle Voſs with the left-hand; a German mode of ennobling courtezans, invented, by pliant courtiers and complaiſant prieſts, to ſave appearances, ſay they. This lady ſtill continues a mixture of prudery and cyniſme (*o*), affectation and ingenuouſneſs. She can find underſtanding only in the Engliſh, whoſe language ſhe ſpeaks tolerably well.

Manſtein is ſuſpected to be the author of ſome of the intended changes in the army, the purport of which is to better the condition of the ſoldier, and the ſubaltern, at the expence of the captain. I repeat, this laſt is a formidable cohort; and that innovations of ſuch a kind re-

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(*o*) We know no ſuch word. Perhaps from Κυω, or from Κυων; the metaphorical and leaſt offenſive tranſlation of which may be *coquetry*. T.

quire great foreſight, and inflexible fortitude. Prince Henry, who is profoundly ſilent, in public, concerning all operations, will very warmly take part with the army, ſhould it find cauſe of complaint, and hopes thus to regain what, by his exceſſive haughtineſs, he has loſt. But the army ariſtocracy know him too well to confide in him; they know that the *Gitons* (*p*) have been, and will always continue with him, the ſovereign arbiters; that, when circumſtances have obliged him to ſeek the aid of men of merit, he has always found their preſence a burthen, which his crazy frame has ſhaken off as ſoon as poſſible; that, in fine, his day is ended, with reſpect to war, and that he is odious to the miniſtry.

It ſeems one Count Bruhl is choſen governor of the Prince Royal; and nothing

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(*p*) This word has a meaning too offenſive to be tranſlated. If the reader has unfortunately ever heard of the moſt contemptible of wretches, and the moſt unnatural of crimes, he may then be his own interpreter. T.

thing better proves the influence of Biſhopſwerder than this eternal preference of Saxons. Count Bruhl, ſon of the oſtentatious ſatrap of the ſame name (*q*), brother of the grand maſter of the Saxon artillery; amiable, well informed, really or pretendedly believing in the reveries of the myſtics, with little of the ſoldier, yet willing to profit by circumſtances and to enter the military career with gigantic ſtrides—this Count I ſay demands to enter the ſervice as a lieutenant-general; a thing unheard of in the Pruſſian army, and which will cauſe infinite diſcontent.

An interdict has lately been iſſued, prohibiting the diſcount of bills at the bank; which is very wiſe in theory, but here accompanied by great inconveniences in practice; for either the bank or the

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(*q*) Who was page to Auguſtus II. of Saxony, prime miniſter to Auguſtus III. favourite to his conſort, hated by the late King of Pruſſia, and who had the greateſt number of coats, waiſtcoats, &c. of any man in the world. T.

King muſt pay the intereſt of two and a half per cent for about ſeventeen million of crowns, which is the amount of the capital of and the money brought into the bank, in a country where monied men find no means of employing their capitals. The bank cannot pay this two and a half per cent, without becoming burthenſome to the King, except by diſcounting bills of exchange; and it will hereafter be the leſs able, if the maritime company, founded as I have before ſaid on ſo frail a baſis, and obliged to divide at leaſt ten per cent to the proprietors, ſhould loſe any one of its moſt beneficial excluſive privileges; that of wood, for example; and ſhould not be able to afford the bank, to which the maritime ſociety pays five per cent for all the money it there borrows, the ſame ſources of profit, which have hitherto been open.

Firſt P. S. The miniſter Schulemburg has reſigned; his reſignation is not yet accepted.

The King yeſterday ſupped with his daughter, Mademoiſelle Vierey—(the intimate friend of Mademoiſelle Voſs, and placed by her in his daughter's ſervice ſince his acceſſion to the throne)—and the well-beloved. Hence it ſhould ſeem that the romance draws toward a concluſion.

It is more than ever certain the King tranſacts no buſineſs, and that he is mad after pleaſure. The ſecrets of the palace on this ſubject are very ill kept indeed; and nothing as I think can better prove the feebleneſs of the maſter, the little awe in which he is held, and the worthleſſneſs of his creatures.

Second P. S. The King is ſo terrified, by the univerſal clamour which the capitation tax has excited, that it is renounced. Some of his intimates to-day ſpoke to me of ſubſtitutes; but what can be expected from an avaricious and weak prince, whom two days murmuring have cauſed to retreat, and to whom we can only ſay — "Tax the eſtates of "the nobility, and lend out ſome of "your millions; that you may procure "the intereſt which nations in debt are "obliged to pay."

LETTER XLIX.

November 21ſt, 1786.

THERE are ſuſpicions, which are daily ſtrengthened, of a ſecret negotiation between the Emperor and Pruſſia; or at leaſt that propoſitions have been made, either by the firſt or reciprocally, on which deliberations are held. I neither have the money nor the requiſite means to diſcover what they are. An ambaſſador can effect any thing of this kind, and with impunity. But, though I even poſſeſſed the great engine of corruption, what danger ſhould I not be in, ſhould I ſet it in motion? I have no credentials, direct or indirect. An act of authority might diſpoſe of me and my papers, in an inſtant; and I ſhould be ruined, here and elſewhere, for my too inconſiderate zeal. Spur on your ambaſſador therefore, or haſten to oppoſe to this puiſſant coalition, which nothing could reſiſt on this ſide of the Rhine, the ſyſtem of union with England, the baſis of which you have traced out, and which ſhall be the ſalvation of the world. Think on Poland, I conjure you. What they have done (if they did not extend their acquiſitions it was in fact becauſe they would not) they will again do, and that even without the intervention of Ruſſia; of that ſleeping giant, who waking may change the face of the globe.

In truth, it is the coolneſs between the two imperial courts which moſt confirms the ſuſpicions of a new ſyſtem. All that I can imagine, concerning its foundation, is that its pretext is the election of a King of the Romans, and its purport a ſtrict alliance, which ſhall deſtroy the Germanic confederation. As this confederation was the work of the King, while Prince of Pruſſia, or as he wiſhes to believe it his, and as he regards it as a maſter-piece, it may be doubted whether the Emperor will ſucceed. But, if the news of yeſterday be true, there is a great point gained. Advice is received that the Electreſs Palatine is beyond hope. Should ſhe die, the Elector would marry again on the morrow, and affairs may and muſt aſſume a different face. If I am not miſtaken, it is difficult to reflect too ſeriouſly on this ſubject. For my own part, unleſs my inſtructions and my means are amplified, I only can obſerve, according to the beſt of my power, the internal acts of government, and the court.

The reaſon that Count Schulemburg, one of the miniſters of ſtate, has demanded to retire is, in part, that he was charged to carry the capitation tax into execution, which he neither conceived nor approved, and which he truly regarded as a very unpopular, if not a very odious office. This miniſter, a man of underſtanding, and who would have again been at the head of affairs if, at his firſt cauſe of diſguſt, he had determined to reſign his place, is infinitely diſagreeable to the domeſtic agents. The long favour he has enjoyed, his rapid fortune, and his watchful perſpicacity, have angered or diſturbed all his rivals. Neither is he one of thoſe pliant inſtruments that will bend into any form. The incapacity of moſt of the other miniſters afforded him the pretence of being obſtinate in opinion. The abſurdities of the courtiers, not to ſay their extravagant follies, embolden him to return that contempt which the reputation of his abilities incites with uſury. For what will not ſuch a reputation eradicate, eſpecially in a country where men are ſo ſcarce? But if, as it is ſaid (I have not yet had time to verify the fact), there be a coalition between Struenſee and Welner, Schulemburg is undone, for they will no longer ſtand in need of him. As he made illneſs his pretence, the King in a very friendly letter only accepted his reſignation *per interim*, and on condition that his ſignature ſhould ſanction whatever related to his department.

Meantime the Aulic (r) ſyſtem, that of myſticiſm, and the favour of the myſtics ties are continued, or rather increaſed and adorned. The Duke of Weimar arrived here laſt night. He has the apartments of the Duke of Brunſwic, at the palace. This Prince, the great apoſtle of the faſhionable ſect, and of whom I ſpoke in my diſpatches from Brunſwic and Magdeburg, had long had the character of being only an *arbiter elegantiarum*; a zealous promoter of letters and arts; an œconomiſt by ſyſtem, and a ſpendthrift by temperament. I ſome months ſince ſuſpected him of military enthuſiaſm. It is now avowed. He comes to enter into the Pruſſian ſervice. Such generals will never renew the war of ſeven years.

(r) *Aulic*, i. e. Court.

In other reſpects, affairs continue the ſame. The King invited himſelf to ſup with Prince Henry to-day. The Prince, who continues his awkward plans, ſtifling his pent-up rage, has informed the foreign ambaſſadors that the doors of his palace would be opened every Monday, and that, if they thought proper to form card-parties there, he ſhould receive them with pleaſure. He wiſhes to change the cuſtom which, hitherto, has prohibited all who appertain to the Corps Diplomatique from eating with princes of the blood, and inſenſibly to invite them to his ſuppers. His credit is at the loweſt ebb; yet I ſtill believe, would he perſevere in ſilence, abſtain from all pretenſions, impatience, and avidity of power, he would highly embarraſs the oppoſite party, and would at length be triumphant.

Murmurs become general againſt the obſcure agents of the cabinet; and the nobility, now neglected to make room for the Saxons, would be better pleaſed to behold a prince at the head of adminiſtration, than obſcure clerks, who never can acquire great and acknowledged fortunes, except by great changes. Yet the ariſtocracy is little dependent on ſuch ſubalterns, and holds them in little dread.

The Duke of Courland is ſoon to arrive. As he is to be reimburſed conſiderable ſums, it is to be preſumed that the whole of the debts of the Heir Apparent, which it is not decent to have left unpaid for ſeveral months after his acceſſion, will then be diſcharged. This fact, combined with the ſuppers of the procureſſes, the number of which ſuppers increaſes at the Princeſs Frederica's, and for which purpoſe her eſtabliſhment has evidently been granted, ſeriouſly attaint the moral character of the King.

Madam de F * *, who would not depart for Warſaw without making ſome attempt, yeſterday had a very gay audience of the King; an audience of anecdote, at which he complained of his tireſome trade, and was earneſt in his deſires that ſhe ſhould remain at Berlin; reproached her with having ſtolen the portrait of Suck from him; and complained to her of the impoliteneſs and blunders of the Prince de P * *, who thought his very daughter, the Princeſs Frederica, ugly and ſlatternly. This continued an hour, and probably, if Madam de F * * had come hither with greater precaution and for a longer time, ſhe might have had ſome ſucceſs. But it is a being ſo perverſe, ſo avaricious, and ſo dangerous, that it is perhaps beſt ſhe ſhould travel with her talents elſewhere: to Paris, for example, where ſhe is known, where ſhe would not increaſe licentiouſneſs, and never could obtain any important influence; whereas, if admitted to the privy-council of kings, ſhe might ſet Europe in flames, to obtain money, or even for her own private diverſion. I took advantage of the moment that ſhe thought proper to depart from the route I had traced out, to reiterate my information that her proceedings might have conſequences much more ſerious than reſult from wounded vanity, and to declare I no longer ſhould be a party concerned.

I. Becauſe it did not become me to riſk my character, in an affair where my advice was not followed.

II. And becauſe the ambition of ladies has not, cannot have, the ſame motives, principles, proceedings, and concluſion, as that of a man, who has a reſpect for himſelf.

Should ſhe ſucceed, which appears to

me impoſſible, ſhe is too much in my power to eſcape my influence.

P. S. Lord Dalrymple it is reported is recalled, and Ewart remains at the head of the embaſſay without a ſuperior. Dalrymple is a man of honour, and ſenſe; ſometimes weariſome, becauſe he is continually wearied, but endowed with more underſtanding than will be believed, by thoſe who have not carefully obſerved him; and alſo with generous, liberal, and fixed principles. If pacific coalition be ſincerely intended, it is neceſſary to bring Dalrymple ambaſſador to Paris. With reſpect to Ewart, I believe the cabinet at St. James's finds it convenient to maintain a ſpy here, who is the intimate friend of one miniſter, and the ſon-in-law of another. But what can be alleged in excuſe of the cabinet of Berlin, that ſhall tolerate ſuch an incumbrance? This is but public report, which I ſuſpect.

Commiſſions of enquiry begin to be faſhionable: one has lately been appointed to examine the monopoly of ſugars. The people of Hamburg offered to ſupply the ſame articles at leſs than half price.

Another to examine the cloth manufactory.

Another the wood monopoly, which is to be reduced to half its preſent price (independent of the ſuppreſſion of the company, by which it is furniſhed). But how? By what means? The change is aſſuredly one of the moſt urgent, and the moſt profitable that could be made for the country; but the abolition of all theſe monopolies, ſugar excepted, which is granted to an individual (*s*), ſuppoſes the deſtruction of the maritime company, that ſtrange firm, which has promiſed

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(*s*) Splittgerber and Co. who had not only the monopoly of all the refining houſes, but alſo a foundery for muſkets, ſmall arms, ſword-blades, &c. &c. a manufactory for hard-ware, cutlery, &c. &c. and another for braziery; all monopolies that have exiſted for many years, and all granted by Frederic II. the King who is ſo emphatically, and ſo falſely, held up as the mirror of wiſdom, and the demi-god to whom future ages are to erect ſtatues, build temples, burn incenſe, fall down and adore. T.

the proprietors a dividend of ten per cent, be circumſtances what they may. This fantaſtic ſuperſtructure cannot be pulled down, unleſs by a very able hand, without riſk of danger from its ruins. Therefore, in his letter to the miniſter Schulemburg, the King renounces this project, and commands that it ſhould be contradicted in all the public papers. What a fluctuation of plans, orders, and intentions! What poverty of power and of means!

LETTER. L.

November 24*th*, 1786.

COUNT Hertzberg has made a new attempt to interfere in the affairs of Holland, which had been interdicted him by the King, and has preſented a memorial on the ſubject, in which he pretends to prove that crowned heads have ſeveral times ſtood forth as mediators, between the States and the Stadtholder; and that the inſidious reply of France ſtated that as fact which was in diſpute. Prince Henry believes this memorial has produced ſome effect. I have my reaſons for being of a different opinion; however I informed him that, if he could procure me a copy, its futility ſhould ſoon be demonſtrated. I doubt whether he has even thus much power.

Here let me remark, we are reconciled. I refuſed two invitations, and he has made every kind of advance to me, which decorum requires I ſhould receive with politeneſs.

The journey of the Duke of Weimar certainly had no other end but that of his admiſſion into the Pruſſian ſervice, which is to ſtrengthen the riſing fame of the Germanic confederation. This Prince in reality warmly protects the ſyſtem of thoſe who find, in the depth of their myſtical abilities, rules for governing a kingdom. The favour in which theſe ſyſtems are held continually increaſes in fervour; or rather is become viſible, for it never was cool. The brother of the Margrave of Baden, a faſhionable enthuſiaſt, has a natural ſon, for whom he wiſhes to provide. This is the great affair of which he is come hither perſonally to treat; and he has met a miraculouſly kind welcome.

Buſineſs is not quite ſo well. There is ſo much confuſion, in domeſtic affairs, that the King only iſſues money on account, to the various officers of the houſehold. It is determined that all his debts, while Prince of Pruſſia, are to be

paid;

paid; that the Prince Royal ſhall have an eſtabliſhment, and a table of ten covers; that the Princeſs Frederica ſhall have another, equal to the eſtabliſhment of the Queen; and that the period, when theſe arrangements are to take place, is to be after the ſtatements of expence have been formed.

The army is diſcontented.

I. Becauſe the King appears on the parade only once a week.

II. Becauſe commiſſions of major and lieutenant-colonel are multiplied to ſatiety (For example, all the captains who have been in actual ſervice have obtained them. This is the ſecond chapter of titles, and patents of nobility, by ſcores.) a favour which never was formerly granted; not even at the ſolicitation of the greateſt princes (*t*).

III. Becauſe much is talked of, little done; becauſe that few are puniſhed, and little is required; and, in a word, becauſe

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(*t*) Rank in the Pruſſian ſervice was formerly confined to ſeniority. T.

that the army does not now, as formerly, abſorb the whole attention of the Sovereign.

It does not appear that Manſtein diminiſhes the credit of the aide de camp Goltz, who is become a Count, and who, in what relates to military affairs, has evidently more influence than his rivals. He has great abilities, without having ſuch as are neceſſary to that place; which, in fact, is equivalent to that of miniſter for the war department.

It is ſubject of aſtoniſhment, to the few men of obſervation who are attentive to whatever may lead to a knowledge of the moral character of the new King, that he ſhould behave ſo coldly to one of his aides de camp named Boulet, whom I have before ſeveral times mentioned. Boulet is a French refugee, of no ſuperior underſtanding; an honeſt man, with little ambition; a very ordinary engineer, though here a diſtinguiſhed one, becauſe here there are none. He has been twenty years attached to the monarch, but never was admitted a party in his ſecret pleaſures, which were formerly almoſt neceſſary, to ſupport the ſolitude of Potſdam, and the hatred of the late King. He neither increaſes nor diminiſhes in favour, and his influence is almoſt a nullity. Such a repugnance for a man of ſome conſequence, in his profeſſion, and who neither can offend nor diſguſt, is enigmatical.

It is nearly certain that the capitation plan will be rejected. This haſty expedient would not have been a ſubſtitute equal to their wants. But you muſt feel how much ſo many variations will diminiſh all confidence in the ſubaltern and concealed adminiſtrators, who act inſtead of miniſters; and how every circumſtance concurs to render a prime miniſter neceſſary. Nothing ſeems determined on except a deſire to change. There is no ſyſtem; for I cannot call the vague deſire of eaſing the people by that term; nor any regular plans, formed from knowledge, examination, and reflection.

None of the difficulties, for example, had been foreſeen that ariſe from the ſuppreſſion of the monopoly and adminiſtration of tobacco, which afforded an aſylum to twelve hundred invalids, army ſubalterns, and even lieutenants. Theſe invalids muſt live, and be maintained by the King. Nor is this all. Shares in the tobacco company originally coſt a thouſand crowns, and brought in eleven per cent; the price afterward roſe to fourteen hundred crowns. The contract granted by the late King was to be in force to the year 1793. Should the King buy in theſe ſhares, at a thouſand crowns each, this would be unjuſt; ſince they have been purchaſed at fourteen hundred, on the faith of a contract of which ſeven years are unexpired. If he ſhould pay intereſt for them, at the rate of eight per cent, till the year 1793, he muſt then himſelf become a loſer. Would it not have been better not to have made any change, till the contract ſhould expire of itſelf; or till he had found a proper ſubſtitute? The effects which are the repreſentatives of the capital conſiſt in utenſils, warehouſes, houſes,

carriages,

carriages, &c. &c. Theſe cannot all be ſold without loſs, which muſt likewiſe fall on the King. The monopoly was burthened with penſions, beſtowed on perſons by whom they had been merited; or, if you pleaſe, obtained for that very affair which paid thoſe penſions (*u*).—They muſt hereafter be diſcharged by ſome other fund, &c. &c.

Heaven forbid I ſhould pretend ſuch difficulties ought not to be ſurmounted! Improvement would then never be accompliſhed. But they ought to have been foreſeen, which they have not; ſo that the public only perceives, in this ſuppreſſion, a real evil in return for an unaſked good. This mania to underſell the ſmugglers, or to deſtroy illicit trade, if great care be not taken, will be more injurious to the people than the

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(*u*) The author is here, as in many other places, obſcure. The meaning moſt probably is that they were penſions granted in return for the ſums that were riſked, at the eſtabliſhment of the monopoly. T.

trade itſelf was to the ſtate (x). Oppoſition to contraband trade ought to be the conſequence of one comprehenſive ſyſtem; and thoſe are ſhort-ſighted views which endeavour to correct partial abuſes, that appertain to the general vices of adminiſtration. The refining of ſugar, the fabricating of arms, ſilk, gauze, ſtuffs, cloths, in a word, whatever relates to induſtry, all are directed by regulations deſtructive to commerce. But may all this vaniſh by a ſingle act of volition? Impoſſible; without producing convulſions in the ſtate. And thus are truth and benevolence diſcredited, and kings diſcouraged. Woe to him who pulls down without precaution.

The principles of the two kings, concerning their perſonal dignity, appear to be ſo different as to give room for reflection, relative to this country. When Frederic II. eſtabliſhed the coffee monopoly, the citizens of Potſdam were daring enough to load a cart with coffee-pots, and coffee-mills, to drive it through the town and overturn it into the river. Frederic, who was a ſpectator of this burleſque proceſſion, opened his window and laughed heartily. Here we have an anecdote of him whom they call the Tiberius of Pruſſia. The following is another of the Pruſſian Titus.

(x) In what does the difference between the ſtate and the people conſiſt? The queſtion is aſked to induce the young, not the well informed, reader to reflect. T.

The day before yeſterday, the clerk of a merchant, named Olier, was impriſoned; and he was not informed, till the morning after, that the cauſe of his impriſonment was ſome trifling ſpeech, relative to the King; and that, ſhould he commit a ſimilar offence, the dungeon would give a good account of him! Such are the firſt fruits of a gloomy internal adminiſtration, of which the vanity and poverty of mind of the King have been productive. What a foreboding of tyranny; whether it be royal, or, which is worſe, ſubaltern! Under what circumſtances, and in what a country! There where the maſter, whoſe vanity is ſo iraſcible, wiſhes to appear good; and where there is no counterpoiſe to his power, in the public opinion; for the public has no opinion!

The commiſſion of inquiry, ſitting on Launay, remains ſilent, retards its proceedings, forces or ſeeks for facts, and decides on nothing. Du Boſc is very induſtrious. Two merchants are arrived from each province, who are to give their advice, relative to the beſt manner of rendering trade flouriſhing. It is not yet known here that, though merchants only ſhould be truſted with the execution of a commercial plan, they never ſhould be conſulted, concerning a general ſyſtem; becauſe their views and their intereſts are always partial. One of them however has given advice which is very ſage, in the preſent ſtate of affairs; and that is to forbid the ſilk manufactories, which are all on the royal eſtabliſhment, to make any but plain ſilks. Should they determine ſo to do, the King of Pruſſia may ſupply Sweden, Poland, and a part of Ruſſia.

The Princeſs Elizabeth, the divorced conſort of the King, has requeſted to have a place five miles from Berlin; and that his Majeſty would appoint the ladies and gentlemen who ſhall be her attendants. It is ſuppoſed that the attempts this Princeſs makes have been ſuggeſted to her by an adroit and intriguing officer; but it is not ſhe who will become formidable to the Queen; though I really dare not ſay ſo much for Mademoiſelle Voſs. What muſt be the deſtiny of a country, which ſoon is to be divided among prieſts, myſtics, and proſtitutes?

In deſpite of all my diligence to divine what is in treaty with the court of Vienna, I can only form conjectures. However, when I reflect that the Pruſſian ambaſſador to Auſtria is an incapable perſon, Count Podewils; and that the Emperor's ambaſſador, Prince Reuſs, has not altered his conduct; that Prince Henry, though generally ill-informed, would have ſome poſitive intelligence, if any thing poſitive had been done, and that he has only vague ſuſpicion, I ſcarcely can believe any important or probable revolution is on the tapis. Did the

Prince (Henry) poſſeſs but one of the twenty wills of which he is compoſed, and which do not all form the equivalent of a whole, ſo that he could expend his money properly, and act with conſiſtency, his ſuperior information muſt give him a great aſcendancy in the cabinet.

But why do we not rid ourſelves of this complication of political affairs, by at once changing our foreign ſyſtem, and breaking down the only oppoſing barrier? I mean to ſay, by reſpectable arrangements, and ſincere advances. Why do we not ſtifle commercial jealouſy, that mother of national animoſity, which has ſilenced good ſenſe, and pompouſly predicted, ſupported by the ſophiſms of mercantile cupidity, that total ruin, whether it be for France or England, muſt be the reſult of the unfavourable balance to which a freedom of trade could not fail to give birth? Is it then ſo difficult to demonſtrate that the trade of France might be much more advantageous to Great

Britain than that of any other country; and *vice verſa?* Who that will but open his eyes will not ſee the reaſon?—It is in the will of nature, by which thoſe monarchies are nearer each other than they are to other countries. The returns of the trade which might be carried on, between the ſouthern coaſt of England and north weſt of France, might take place five or ſix times a year, as in the more internal commerce. The capital employed in this trade might therefore, in both countries, be productive of five or ſix times its preſent quantity of induſtry; and might afford employment and ſubſiſtence to ſix times as many inhabitants, as the ſame capital could effect in moſt other branches of foreign trade. Between thoſe parts of France and Great Britain which are moſt diſtant from each other, the returns might at leaſt be made once a year; and would conſequently be thrice as profitable as the trade, formerly ſo much vaunted, with North America; in which the returns uſually took place only once in three, and very frequently only once in four or five years.— The ſage Smith aſks,—"If we conſider "its population, wants, and wealth, is "not France at leaſt a market eight "times more extenſive (for England), and, "by reaſon of its quick returns, twenty-"four times more advantageous, than "ever was that of the Engliſh colonies "of North America (*y*)?" It is not leſs, or rather, it is more evident that the trade with Great Britain would be in an equal degree uſeful to France, in proportion to the wealth, population, and proximity of the two countries. It would eventually have the ſame ſuperiority over that

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(*y*) Either we have not been fortunate enough to find the paſſage the author quotes, or he has taken the ſenſe of various paſſages. Smith ſays—"A capi-"tal employed in the home trade will ſometimes make "twelve operations, or be ſent out and returned twelve "times, before a capital employed in the foreign trade "of conſumption has made one. If the capitals are "equal, therefore, the one will give four and twenty "times more encouragement, and ſupport, to the in-"duſtry of the country than the other." Smith's Wealth of Nations, vol. ii. p. 61. edit. 1786.

which France has made with her colonies. Oh, human folly! What labours do we undertake to deprive ourſelves of the benefits of nature! How prodigious a difference between that trade, which the politics of the two nations have thought it right to diſcourage, and that which has been the moſt favoured!——It appears to me that a work which ſhould develope theſe ideas, and which begin no longer to be thought monſtrous by the Engliſh, would be very uſeful, and could not be entruſted to a man of too great abilities.

P. S. I have circumſtantial evidence that the King is more than ever indolent. Letters are anſwered in eight or ten days, and in a more long and careful manner than under the late King; which ſufficiently proves that ſecretaries have great interference. Yet what muſt we ſay of a cabinet in which the King never acts, although it is impoſſible to cite any miniſter whoſe influence has effected ſuch or ſuch a thing? Even into the aſſembly of the general directory, which ſits twice a week, the King never comes. And this is the king who wiſhes to change the fiſcal ſyſtem! None but a Hercules can cleanſe the Augean ſtables.

LETTER LI.

November 28th, 1786.

PEOPLE are not agreed concerning the kind of ſervices which the committee of merchants, convoked from the different provinces, may render government. Theſe good folks are highly aſtoniſhed to hear themſelves conſulted on affairs of ſtate; for there is as great a diſtance between them and Mont-Audouin and Prémores as there is between the Pruſſian miniſters and our Sully and Colbert. The queſtion ſhould be to reverſe the general and fundamental ſyſtem, and they ſeek only palliatives. The blood is infected, and, inſtead of purifying it, they endeavour but to heal this or that ulcer. They will inflame the gangrene, and render the virus more envenomed.

There are great diſputes concerning the manufactures. But, good God!

ought they to begin with theſe? And, ſhould they well and clearly have determined which were neceſſary to preſerve, and which to neglect, ought they not, before they preſcribe rules, to aſſume as a *datum*—that Berlin is not a place for manufactures; becauſe that the dearneſs of labour, local and national inconveniences, &c. &c. are there united; and becauſe that the eſtabliſhment of manufactures muſt there become a diſaſtrous extravagance? for which reaſon the manufacturers themſelves carry on a contraband trade, and ſell French for Pruſſian ſtuffs. As they have no competitors, they affix what price they pleaſe on their merchandize; and, as nothing is eaſier than to ſmuggle, they take a part of their goods to the fairs of Frankfort, which they ſell or do not ſell, as it ſhall happen, and purchaſe Lyons ſilks, to which they affix Berlin ſtamps, and enter them without any other precaution, or the leaſt riſk; ſince the cuſtom-houſe officers of the barriers, who are invalids either of the court or army, cannot diſtinguiſh.

tinguiſh whether what is ſhewn them be taffety or ſattin; ſtill leſs, whether it be woven at Lyons or Berlin. This city neither poſſeſſes induſtry, emulation, taſte, genius, nor money, to effect ſuch changes. Another age, and I know not how many tranſitions among the Germans, are neceſſary for them to imitate that luxury of embelliſhment, for which they have the folly to wiſh. Incapable of chooſing, between that which is poſſible and proper and that which is chimerical and injurious, without means, principles, or ſyſtem, the preſent attempts of theſe men, to which they owe their ephemerical exiſtence, will have no other effect than that of leading, the King firſt, and afterward the vulgar and the fooliſh, to believe that the evil is irreparable.

The inheritance of the margraviate of Schwedt is an affair at this moment which, in other hands, might have important conſequences. The Margrave approaches his end. After the partition of Poland, the late King wrote to his brother, Prince Henry, that he was deſirous of beſtowing on him a peculiar mark of his friendſhip and gratitude, for the ſervice he had rendered the State. Frederic thought he ſhould have rid himſelf of his promiſe by a ſtatue; but he was privately given to underſtand that fame was left to the care of poſterity, and that the preſent queſtion was an increaſe of poſſeſſion. A few months afterward, the Margrave of Schwedt, brother of the preſent Margrave, died; the King ſeized the occaſion to releaſe himſelf from his word. In a very authentic patent, and at a long term, he conferred on Prince Henry the reverſion of the margraviate, on condition that he ſhould diſcharge all the burthens with which this great fief is loaded. Frederic dies, and his ſucceſſor declares that all ſurvivances, and donations *in futuro*, &c. are null, and that he will not confirm them. Prince Henry finds himſelf among the number of thoſe on whom reverſions were beſtowed. There is little probability theſe lands will be given him. The queſtion is, will he or will he not have any compenſation?

Prince Henry certainly has pretences to exclaim againſt ingratitude, and exclaim he will. There it will end. Melancholy mad at one moment, he will rave the next; and thus, giving vent to his griefs, will ſave his life; for mute affliction only is dangerous.

Thoſe however, who are not among his partiſans, will obſerve this proceeding with the greater inquietude, becauſe it begins to appear that even the perſonal promiſes of the King are ſuſceptible of wavering. I ſpoke to you in one of my diſpatches of the reſtitution of ſome bailliages, to the Duke of Mecklenburg, which had been promiſed, to the envoy of the Duke, by the King himſelf. He has ſince withdrawn, or at leaſt ſuſpended, his promiſe. So much facility in departing from recent engagements, combined with the clamours of the people, and the excluſive contracts, that are trodden under foot without pity, appear to be but ill omens. It has been inſerted, for example, *by command*, in the public papers, —"That the King declares to all the

“ army clothiers that, from paternal mo-“ tives,”—all of which have been announced with emphaſis, as you will ſee in every gazette—“ the King annuls “ their contracts; even thoſe that had “ been recently confirmed.” Which clauſe is the more gratuitouſly odious, and abſurd, as he had not confirmed any one; he therefore need not have taken the trouble *ſolemnly* to inform his ſubjects that he knew very well how, when occaſion ſhould ſerve, *ſolemnly* to break his word.

The King ſpoke to me yeſterday concerning the woollen manufactory. I endeavoured to make him underſtand that, before we pulled down our houſe, we ſhould know where to find a lodging, or how we might diſpoſe of the ruins. He anſwered me laughing, “ Oh! Schmits “ is your banker.” (He is the contractor for this manufactory.) “ Very true, Sire,” replied I; “ but he has not hitherto “ made me a preſent of the money which “ has been remitted me through his “ hands.” This may ſhew you what

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engines are ſet at work, to keep me at a diſtance. The following is a more circumſtantial proof.

I was ſix days very ill, and did not make my appearance at court, which I the leſs regretted becauſe that nothing is learned in ſuch grand company. The day before yeſterday, the King ſaid, at his Lotto, "Where is the Count de * * *? "It is an age ſince I ſaw him." 'That is 'not aſtoniſhing, Sire,' ſaid one of the houſehold. 'He paſſes his time at the 'houſe of Struenſee; with Meſſrs. Bieſ'ter and Nicolai.'—You muſt underſtand that Bieſter and Nicolai are two learned Germans, who have written much againſt Lavater and the myſtics; that they never enter the houſe of, nor are they as I believe perſonally acquainted with Struenſee. The intention was to lead the King to ſuppoſe I was an anti-myſtic.

The appointment of Count Charles Bruhl, to the place of governor of the Prince Royal, has made the party more than ever triumphant. To the merit of appertaining to that honourable ſect, Count Leppel, the moſt incapable and ridiculous of men, is indebted for his Swediſh embaſſy; as are Baron Doernberg for favours of every kind, Prince Frederic for his intimacy, the Duke of Weimar, the brother of the Margrave of Baden, and the Prince of Deſſau for their ſucceſs, and the courtiers that ſurround the King for their influence and favour. It looks like a tacit confederacy; and that there is a determination to admit none but proved and fervent ſectaries into adminiſtration. No one dares combat them; every body bows before them. The ſlaves of the court and the city, who were not the firſt to yield, mutter diſapprobation, and by degrees will range themſelves on the ſide of the prevailing party.

There is no paraſite, however great, that attempts to excuſe the proſtitution of titles, patents of nobility, ribbands, academical places, and military promotions, which daily is aggravated. Seventeen

teen majors, for example, have been made; merely in acquittal of vague and inconſiderate promiſes; and that there may be the ſemblance of recollecting, at *little* expence, hopes that had been given, when every *little* aid was acceptable.

The King makes himſelf too public not to talk very idly. It would be better that, at the commencement of a reign, the Pruſſian Monarch ſhould not find time daily to have a tireſome concert, or a more languid Lotto; eſpecially when the world knows the nothings, or the worſe, that employ his mornings! He more and more, every day, conſtitutes himſelf the redreſſor of the wrongs committed by his uncle. Thoſe colonels or generals that were diſmiſſed return to the army with promotions, or appointments, that recompenſe their ſufferings. The counſellors that formerly were degraded, concerning the affair of the miller Arnold, have been reinſtated in their functions. To ſay the truth their puniſhment was one of the moſt iniquitous of the acts (z) of Frederic II. But his prin-

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(z) We ought to read *private* acts.—Arnold held a mill of Count Schmettau; and, being in arrear for ſeveral years rent, the mill was ſeized and ſold. Arnold laid a falſe complaint againſt one Gerſdorf, for having robbed him of the water by which his mill had been ſupplied, and his family maintained. The King ordered the ſentence, that had condemned Arnold to loſe his mill for the payment of arrears, to be reviſed. His orders were obeyed. The judgment was confirmed. Without proper examination, the King ſent for the judges, deprived them of their places, condemned them to pay the coſts of Arnold, ſentenced Gerſdorf to reſtore the water or build a wind-mill, ſent them to the priſon for malefactors, ordered Baron Zedlitz to ſee puniſhment inflicted or to beware of puniſhment himſelf, ruined them all, and, without hearing him, commanded his Grand Chancellor, Furſt, who came to prove that he could not be guilty becauſe he had no concern in the trial, *to march!* and degraded him from all his dignities. The facts were, that the pond of Gerſdorf, which Arnold affirmed had been dug to his detriment, had been a pond for ages; that Gerſdorf was neither his landlord nor his proſecutor, but Schmettau; that Arnold actually paid no rent; and that the proofs of the legality of the ſentence, by which he had been caſt, were evident to all the judges, none

cipal victim, the Chancellor Furſt, has hitherto been forgotten. His great age
indeed

none of whom could have any intereſt in giving a falſe judgment. This act of tyranny was echoed with applauſe through all Europe, and among others by the Engliſh newſpapers, magazines, annual regiſters, &c. moſt of which, with equal piety and patriotiſm, hoped in good time to ſee juſtice thus righteouſly adminiſtered in England.

Another example of this *great* King's love of liberty, humanity, and the rights of mankind, as has been the eternal aſſertion of near half a century, was as follows. —A peaſant, named Havenbrook, had a law-ſuit for a piece of ground with another peaſant, of the name of Merten, in which the latter was caſt. Merten, a revengeful man, was continually treſpaſſing and driving his cattle on this ground. One morning, Merten being on the premiſes with cattle, Havenbrook ſent his ſon, a youth of nineteen, to turn him off; they came to blows, and unfortunately Merten, the aggreſſor, was killed. Young Havenbrook was tried, and condemned, for manſlaughter, to three years impriſonment; a ſentence ſufficiently rigorous. The upright, the humane Frederic, who was himſelf too the author of all the laws the kingdom was allowed to poſſeſs, wrote under the ſentence—“ 'Are ye judges, ſtudied and learned in “ the laws, and are ye not aſhamed of ſuch a ſentence?
“ It

indeed will not permit him to occupy any poſt. But ſome ſolemn mark of good-will, ſome flattering recompenſe of ſtrict juſtice, while ſo many other recompenſes are granted, which are favours that are often more than ſuſpicious—would this be impoſſible?

Under the late reign, the mines ſolely depended on the miniſter of that department. An arrangement has juſt been made, according to which four tribunals, erected in the provinces, greatly moderate his authority; and this was very neceſſary, in a country where the public right of the mines was the moſt revolting tyranny. But the arrangement does not announce the diſgrace of Heinitz. He has, on the contrary, had ſeveral new departments committed to his charge within this fortnight; and particularly ſome that belonged to Schulemburg. It is a part of the plan to reſtore all things

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"It is my WILL that, according to reaſon and the "laws of nature, his body ſhall be beheaded, and de- "nied the rites of burial." T.

to the ſtate in which they were left by Frederic William in 1740. This criticiſm on the laſt reign may be vengeance dearly purchaſed. At leaſt it is neceſſary to be conſiſtent; and, ſince the grand directory has been reſtored according to its firſt inſtitution, it ought not to be left in indolence, and in a ſtate of humiliating inſufficiency, The diſmiſſion of the miniſter Gaudi is reported, who is the man by whom government might beſt profit, if he were employed. This conſpiracy againſt capacity and knowledge, with good reaſon, alarms thoſe who know the perſons that inſpire predilection.

If I am not miſtaken, there is here, at this moment, an acquiſition to be made, worthy of the King of France: and M. de Colonne is the very man who ought to lay the propoſal before his Majeſty. The illuſtrious La Grange, the greateſt mathematician that has appeared ſince Newton, and who, by his underſtanding and genius, is the man in all Europe who has moſt aſtoniſhed me; La

Grange, the moſt ſage, and perhaps the only true practical philoſopher that has ever exiſted; worthy to be commended for the pertinacious calmneſs of his mind, his manners, and his conduct; in a word a man affectionately reſpected, by the ſmall number of men whom he would admit to be of his acquaintance; this La Grange has lived twenty years at Berlin; whither he was invited, in his youth, by the late King, to ſucceed Euler, who had himſelf pointed him out as the only man proper to be his ſucceſſor. He is much diſguſted; ſilently, but irremediably diſguſted; becauſe that his diſguſt originates in contempt. The paſſions, brutalities, and lunatic boaſtings of Hertzberg; the addition of ſo many with whom La Grange cannot, as academicians, without bluſhing, aſſociate; the very prudent dread of ſeeing himſelf held in painful ſuſpenſe, between the philoſophic repoſe which he regards as the firſt good and that reſpect which he owes himſelf, and which he will not ſuffer to be inſulted: all induce him to retire from a country where the crime of being a foreigner is not to be forgiven, and where he will not ſupport an exiſtence which will only be tolerated. It cannot be doubted but that he would willingly exchange the ſun and the coin of Pruſſia, for the ſun and the coin of France, the only country on earth where men pay homage to the genius of ſcience, and confer laſting fame (*a*); the only country where La Grange, the grandſon of a Frenchman, and who gratefully recollects that we have made him known to Europe, would delight to live, if he muſt renounce his old friends and the abode of his youth. Prince Cardito di Laffredo, ambaſſador from Naples to Copenhagen, has made him the handſomeſt offers, in the name of his ſovereign. He has received preſſing invitations from the Grand Duke, and the King of Sardinia. But all theſe propoſals would eaſily be forgotten, if put in competition with

ours.

(*a*) Surely it is neither prejudice nor illiberality, to repeat the words *national vanity*, in this place. T.

ours. And will not the King of France likewiſe, aided by a worthy comptroller-general, at the time when he would extend that empire of benevolence which appertains to him alone—would not the King of France endeavour to acquire a man whoſe merit is known to all Europe? La Grange here receives a penſion of ſix thouſand livres. And cannot the King of France dedicate that ſum to the firſt mathematician of the age? Is it beneath Louis XVI. to invite a great man, from a miſerable academy, who is there miſunderſtood, miſallied, and thus, by the moſt noble warfare, to extirpate the only literary corps that has wreſtled againſt his proper academies? Would not this act of generoſity be ſuperior to thoſe that are uſually performed? France, with pernicious policy, has been the aſylum of princes, with whoſe neceſſities ſhe was burthened. Why will ſhe not welcome a great man, who would but add to her worth? Has ſhe ſo long enriched others with her loſſes, and will ſhe not enrich herſelf by others' errors? In fine, to ſpeak of the miniſter I love, one De Boynes has given eighteen thouſand livres a year, for a uſeleſs place, to one Boſcovich; a man deſpiſed by all the learned of Europe, as a literary quack of poor abilities; and why will not M. de Calonne grant a penſion of two thouſand crowns, to the firſt man in Europe of his claſs, and probably to the laſt great genius the mathematical ſciences ſhall poſſeſs; the paſſion for which diminiſhes, becauſe of the exceſſive difficulties that are to be ſurmounted, and the infinitely few means of acquiring fame by diſcovery?

I have the hope exceedingly at heart, becauſe I think it a noble one, and becauſe I tenderly love the man. I entreat I may have an immediate anſwer; for I own I have induced Mr. de la Grange to ſuſpend his declarations, on the propoſitions that have been made him, till he has heard what ours may be. I need not repeat that—he whoſe hands are tied muſt call for help.

LETTER LII.

December 2nd, 1786.

ON the 29th, between one and two o'clock, a perſon from Courland came to me, and aſked for the Baron de N * *. He ſaid he was charged with ſome ſecret commiſſion, and delivered him a letter from Mr. Rummel, his brother-in-law, a Syndic of the nobility, and fifty Pruſſian gold Frederics. The letter deſired N * * would give faith to what the bearer ſhould relate, and informed him that the regency of the republic intended to confer on him the place of 'aſſeſſor, if he would repair to Courland, that he might be put in nomination;' and that the appointment was to be made at the beginning of the year. The bearer of the letter ſaid he had known the Baron N * * when a boy. The Baron ſuppoſed him to be an advocate, or a notary, of whom he had ſome confuſed idea. He neither told his name, where he lodged, how he travelled, when he came to Berlin, nor where he was going. Hamburg, Lubec, Vienna, Munich, &c. are places through which he has paſſed, or means to paſs. His journey has been very ſecret, very enigmatical, very myſterious. He only gave it to be underſtood that great changes would ſoon be ſeen in Courland, and that Woronzow was there to enact a grand part, of which he ſpoke ſo as to make it ſuſpected he might become duke. Such are the chief points of this odd interview.

We muſt combine this with the return of the Duke, who arrived three days ago, and with innumerable indications, which demonſtrate that a revolution is either in agitation or preparing, in Courland. Conſternation has ſeized on the Duke. It is only whiſpered, but it appears evident that the States have ſtopped the payment of his revenues, becauſe he does not expend the money in the country; and this is the leaſt of the griefs, entertained at Peterſburg, againſt this deteſted man. Certain it is that he has ſent his wife, who is far advanced in her pregnancy, to Mittau, whither he dares not return himſelf, hoping ſhe ſhall be delivered of a male child; and that this preſumptive heir will reconcile him to his country.

Add further that Baron N * * is of one of the firſt houſes of Courland; that his uncle, the Chamberlain Howen, a capable and enterpriſing man, is at preſent firſt miniſter, or land-marſhal; that all affairs paſs through his hands; and that he is in the greateſt credit; which to ſay truth may be reduced to this, that he has the power of ſelling, with more or leſs meanneſs, this fine but unfortunate province; which however, ſhould it be abandoned by all its neighbours, cannot act otherwiſe than to beſtow, rather than ſuffer itſelf to be ſeized upon. It is very poſſible that the family of N * *, which knows how much this ſtudious young Baron has continually preferred a civil to a military life, has only thought of placing him advantageouſly. (The poſt of aſſeſſor, which is worth from four to five thouſand livres of Courland, per annum, is the poſt of preferment.) But it is equally poſſible, and all circumſtances conſidered very probable, that his aſſiſtance is wiſhed for, in effecting a revolution.

This young Baron is poſſeſſed of honour, information, and underſtanding; has a great reſpect for the rights of mankind, an utter hatred for the Ruſſians, and an ardent deſire his country ſhould rather appertain to any other power. From his infancy the ſport of chance, ruined by misfortunes of every kind, which all had a worthy origin, diſguſted with the gloomy rank of ſubaltern officer, which impedes the progreſs of his ſtudies, and moderate in his deſires, he would accept a place which ſhould beſtow on him the *otium cum dignitate;* but he would not be the ſlave of Ruſſia. He loves France, and is attached to me, to whom he thinks himſelf obliged. He is deſirous of ſerving his country, the cabinet of Verſailles, and his friend. The indeciſion of his mind muſt have been afflicting, eſpecially under circumſtances when, labouring for theſe ſix months like a galley ſlave, and certainly in a manner more uſeful than had he been mounting guard, you have even neglected to prolong his furlough. This at leaſt was perplexing ——I have decided for him.

Making myſelf reſponſible for this prolongation, which it would be ſo iniquitous to refuſe, and which ſurely will be granted, if it be only out of reſpect to me, who find his coadjutorſhip neceſſary; imagining he ſtill has the right of returning into Courland, by throwing up his commiſſion, or even without throwing it up, by ſuffering another nomination to take place; convinced that no one can inform us more exactly of the ſituation of the country, in which he has ſo many relations; perſuaded that this is an important ſtep for ſeveral reaſons, the principal of which I ſhall preſently demonſtrate, and not believing (independant of the expence of a journey of more

than

than four hundred leagues) I ſhould be juſtified in abſenting myſelf, without having received expreſs orders; confiding in the honour of this affectionate young gentleman, as well becauſe of the recommendations of thoſe to whom he is intimately known as from having myſelf proved his principles and his conduct; and ſtill farther convinced that confidence is the moſt powerful of motives, with men of honour, I have thought it the moſt prudent mode to ſuffer him immediately to depart, on his promiſe of ſending me information of whatever paſſes, and of returning to Berlin within two months. It has ſeemed to me that this will conciliate his intereſt and ours. The latter becauſe we ſhall be perfectly, informed of whatever we wiſh to know concerning Courland, of which many things are to be learned, and by which ſtep, at all events, we ſhall make a party in the country, where the ſimple title of conſul, or the permiſſion only of wearing our uniform, with a ſmall penſion, will ſecure to us a man of merit, ſhould he determine to accept the offers of the regency; firſt becauſe Baron N * * will inform himſelf, by this journey, what is the degree of ſtability and profit of the place they propoſe for him, and becauſe, if he be not ſatisfied with this, he may again return to the ſervice of France, with the recommendation of additional labours and ſtrong zeal in her behalf; and, ſhould he be ſatisfied with the offers of Courland, he may accept them while we may better his ſituation, and augment his reſpect and ſafety, by ſuffering him to wear our uniform, &c. &c.

Summarily, this young gentleman, who has ſerved at the ſieges of Port-Mahon and Gibraltar; who is eſteemed and beloved by his commanders; who for ſix months has laboured, under my direction, with uncommon zeal, and aſſiduity not leſs uncommon; I repeat, this gentleman would certainly merit ſuch a mark of favour, though it had been on his own buſineſs ſolely that he had made a journey into Courland. But the truth is I ſend him thither, becauſe I am ſtrongly invited by circumſtances, and am convinced of two things. First, that, were it only perfectly to underſtand this part of the politics of Ruſſia, it is of importance to us at once to know at what to eſtimate the worth and deſtiny, as well as the changes of which this country is ſuſceptible; which, independent of all interior circumſtances, ſtands by ſituation the ſentinel of Poland and of the Baltic, now that Sweden, our arm of the north, is ſo ſeriouſly menaced. My ſecond conviction is that Baron N ** is the propereſt of men faithfully to ſend us this information. Wherefore not afford him aid? Wherefore not preſerve ſuch perſons?

You muſt have ſeen, but perhaps you have not remarked, in the thirty-ſecond abſtract from the gazettes, that Springporten, formerly a colonel in the ſervice of Sweden, has lately entered into the ſervice of Ruſſia, with the rank of major-general; that he is the man who beſt knows Finland; that the Empreſs has granted him three thouſand rubles for his equipment, an eſtate of ſix hundred peaſants, in White Ruſſia, and the key of chamberlain; that he is inceſſantly to make a journey into the Crimea, &c. &c. Though by acquiring ſuch men, with the knowledge and connections which they bring with them, preparations are made for the execution of the greateſt projects, ſtill, by the ſame methods, ſuch projects are rendered abortive.

There was not time, laſt poſt, to write the poſtſcript in cypher, which contains a curious fact, of which P *** will probably make uſe, and application (*b*).

I informed you in No. XLVIII. "That "they have lately interdicted diſcount-"ing bills of exchange, at the bank, &c." —This fact has not been verified. The merchants indeed required it might be done, but their requeſt has not been granted, and it was oppoſed by Struenſee.—But to the news of the day.

(*b*) The laſt letter has no poſtſcript. The author probably means the fact contained in the paragraphs to be found a few pages forward, which begin with the words—*Poſtſcript mentioned in the body of the letter.* T.

There are two verſions, concerning Mademoiſelle Voſs. Both are derived from excellent ſources, and probably the real one will be that which may be compoſed from the two.

I. There will be no marriage. Miſs will depart in a month, for I know not where; and afterward will return to Potſdam.—"I know," ſaid ſhe, "that I diſhonour myſelf. All the compenſation I "aſk is not to ſee any perſon; leave me "in profound ſolitude; I neither wiſh "for riches nor ſplendor."——It is certain that, if ſhe can keep him thus, ſhe will lead him much the farther.

II. Wedneſday, the 22d of laſt month, was the remarkable day on which Mademoiſelle Voſs accepted the King's hand, and promiſed him her own. It was determined the Queen ſhould be brought to approve the plan of the left-handed marriage, as a thing of neceſſity, ſhould ſhe obſtinately diſplay too much repugnance. It is ſingular that, for the conſummation of this rare buſineſs, the arrival of the Duke of Saxe Weimar was waited for, who is the brother-in-law of the Queen. The King thus will be father to four ſorts of children (*c*). The prieſts, who have been conſulted on the manner of reconciling the claims of heaven with the pleaſures of earth, have decided that it will be better to concentrate his enjoyments, by an extraordinary marriage, than inceſſantly to wander from error to error. Nothing has tranſpired, concerning the manner in which this arrangement is to be made known to the uncles; of the name the new Princeſs is to bear; or of her future eſtabliſhment, &c. &c. In all probability, ſhe ſoon will interfere in public affairs; and, ſhould ſhe do ſo, the credit of Biſhopſwerder will diminiſh. She loves neither him nor his daughters. Her party is beſide very oppoſite to that of the myſtics, which gains ground in a

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(*c*) Thoſe of his firſt Queen, Elizabeth, from whom he was divorced, as before-mentioned; thoſe of his preſent Queen; his natural children, by Madam Rietz; and his half-baſtard half-legitimate, by Mademoiſelle Voſs; had this marriage taken place. T.

very fearful manner. I am going to relate a recent anecdote, on that ſubject, which happened in the laſt months of Frederic II. and which is infinitely important, at leaſt for my ſecurity while I remain here, to keep ſecret; of the irrevocable authenticity of which you yourſelf will judge; and which will ſhew you whither tends this imaginary theory of the myſtics, connected with the Roſicrucian-free-maſons, whom among us ſome look upon with pity, and others treat as objects of amuſement. * * * * *
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There is a rumour whiſpered about, which terrifies worthy people, and which, true or falſe, is a faithful indication of the public opinion. It is affirmed that Prince Henry, the Duke of Brunſwic, and General Moellendorf, mean to quit the army. The two firſt probably do not yet think of ſuch a ſtep; but the latter is undubitably the moſt diſcontented of the three. Rich, loyal, ſimple, firm, he poſſeſſes virtues which would do honour to a ſoil on which virtue is more fruitful. He certainly has not been treated either as he himſelf expected or as good citizens have wiſhed. They were deſirous indeed to create him a count; but, among ſo many counts, what need had he of ſuch a title? For which reaſon this reſpectable man replied—"*What have* "*I done?*" This artleſs, noble queſtion was too ſevere, on the herd of nobles, and the multitude of titles that have ſprung up, warmed by the breath of royal munificence, to be agreeable. His modeſt and antique manners are become reproachful to the court; yet is the only reform truly beneficial, and univerſally approved, under the new reign, the work of this general; I mean the abolition of that iniquitous contribution called *graſs forage*; which ſubjected the open country to pillage, during three months of the year, under the pretence of accuſtoming the cavalry to forage. He has not ſince been conſulted on any ſubject, or has had no influence. I ſhould not be ſurpriſed ſhould he retire to his country ſeat; and it is impoſſible to exaggerate the unamiable light in which ſuch a tacit profeſſion of faith would place the King, and his government.

Three months more of ſimilar proceedings and he will have no reſpect to loſe, at leaſt in his own country. Every corrupt ſymptom is manifeſt. Rietz, a raſcal, avaricious, chief-pimp, and an avowed *Giton* (*d*), inſomuch that ' * * * *
* * * * * * * * * * *
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* *.—In a word, Rietz, the vileſt and the moſt debaſed of men, manages the royal houſehold, and enjoys a great part of the court favour. Here it ought to be noted that he is very ſuſceptible of being bought; but he muſt be dearly bribed, for he is covetous and prodigal, and his fortune is to make, ſhould ever

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(*d*) See note, page 64.

France have occaſion to direct the cabinet of Berlin. So long as the King ſhall have any power, Rietz and Prince Frederic of Brunſwic are the two men moſt liable to temptation.

The following is an anecdote of a very low ſpecies, but very characteriſtic for thoſe who know the country. The Italian and French dancers have received orders to dance twice a week, at the German theatre. The purport of ſuch a capricious injunction was to give diſguſt to this ſpecies of people, who are expenſive enough, and to find a pretence for diſmiſſing them. They have been well adviſed, and will dance; but ſuch is the low ſpirit of cunning which preſides over the adminiſtration. Politics are treated as wiſely as theatrical matters.

I this moment learned that Heinitz, one of the miniſters of ſtate, a man of mediocrity but laborious, has written a letter to the King, of which the following is nearly the ſenſe:—" Being a foreigner, not poſſeſſed of any lands in " your ſtates, my zeal cannot be ſuſpect-

"ed by your Majeſty. It is conſequently "my duty to inform you that the pro-"jected capitation-tax will alienate the "hearts of your Majeſty's ſubjects; and "proves that the new regulators of the "finances are, at preſent, little verſed in "public buſineſs"—The King ſaid to him two days after—"I thank you—" and made no further enquiries. Irreſolution does not exclude obſtinacy, although obſtinacy is far from being reſolution. I ſhould not be aſtoniſhed were the tobacco and ſnuff company to remain on its former footing. As for the reſpect which government ſhould preſerve, that muſt take care of itſelf.

It was an attempt ſimilar to that of Heinitz which produced the laſt military promotion, to the diſadvantage of General Moellendorf. The General wrote, with reſpectful but firm dignity, againſt the nomination of Count Bruhl, and intreated the King would ſhow leſs indifference for the army. Thanks were returned, accompanied with theſe words—"The place has been promiſed a year "and a half"—and two days after ſeventeen majors were created. Since this time, coldneſs toward the General has increaſed, and civility has been ſubſtituted for confidence. The letter is not thought well of. It is ſaid that he ought to have reſerved this vigorous blow, for ſome occaſion on which he ſhould not appear to be perſonally intereſted: and it is he himſelf who ſeemed moſt proper to fill the place of governor.

The Duke of Weimar is preparing to make a very pompous wolf-hunt, on the frontiers of Poland. The orders and adjuſtments for this party of pleaſure do not very well agree with the projects and ceremonials of œconomy. Twelve hundred peaſants are commanded to be in readineſs; ſixty horſes have been ſent, and eight baggage-waggons, with the maſters of the foreſts, gentlemen, huntſmen and cooks for this hunt, which is to continue ſix days.

At preſent, I am nearly certain that my ſecond verſion, relative to Mademoiſelle Voſs, is the true one: and that the

Queen

Queen is coaxed into the meaſure. The King never lived on better terms with her. He has often viſited her within this week, pays her debts, and has given her a concert. Probably ſhe has made a virtue of neceſſity. It appears evident that this connection of the King highly deranges the plan of the myſtic adminiſtrators. The family of Mademoiſelle Voſs wiſhes to profit by her elevation; and their advice no way agrees with that of the preſent favourites. Biſhopſwerder, far from gaining upon the King, declines in his eſteem. In a word, revolution may come from that ſide——Will public affairs be the gainer? This queſtion it is impoſſible to anſwer. We can only turn the teleſcope toward the ſpot; or rather the microſcope; for, in truth, we are in the reign and the country of the infinitely minute.

Poſtſcript, mentioned in the body of the letter.

The current coins in Poland were formerly as follow: The mark of fine ſilver of the Cologn. weight was coined at 13 - 3 r. or 80 fl. of Poland.

As to gold coins, there were none but Dutch ducats that had any nominal value: that is to ſay—

At the royal treaſuries, they were taken for 16 ½ k.

By the public, for 18 k.; both of which rates were fixed by decrees of the Diet.

In the Diet of 1786, the ducats were univerſally raiſed to 18 k. each.

The aſſay of the ſilver conſequently cannot any longer be maintained; and it is affirmed there is a determination, hereafter, to coin the fine mark at 14 r. or 84 fl.

But neither can this coinage ſupport itſelf; for, ſhould Berlin coin at 14 r. Poland will be obliged to keep up an equal value at a greater expence, becauſe of carriage.

Under the preſent circumſtances, it might be advantageous to draw on Poland for ducats at 3 r. if the aſſay of ſilver is at 14 r.

But, if the relative value of gold ſhould fall, comparatively to that of ſilver, ſilver may be there bought with profit.

Generally ſpeaking, it appears to me that the recent operations on gold ſhould lead us to reflect on the ſtate of the ſilver, eſpecially in Spain, ſhould that power perſiſt in the folly which, with the greateſt part of Europe, it has given into, of keeping two ſpecies of coin, and hoarding the gold.

2nd P. S. The King, attended by a ſingle laquais and much diſguiſed, has been to the corn and ſtraw warehouſes, where he enquired of the ſoldiers, who worked there, what their wages were—"Five groſchen"—A moment after he put the ſame queſtion to the ſuperintendants,—"Six groſchen."—Three ſoldiers being called to confront the ſuperintendants, and the fraud being proved, a ſubaltern and three ſoldiers were ordered to conduct the two ſuperintendants to Spandau, a civil priſon; and there they are to be tried. The fact is very praiſe-worthy. He makes evening peregrinations almoſt unattended, and addicts himſelf to the minute enquiries of a juſtice of the peace (*e*). At leaſt this is the third time he has acted thus. Some of his attendants imagine he means to imitate the Emperor. After what has paſſed between them, this perhaps would be the moſt ſevere ſymptom of abſolute incapacity.

(*e*) Commiſſaire de quartier.

LETTER LIII.

December 5th, 1786.

THE news of the cabals, which the Emperor again wiſhes to excite at Deux Ponts, and which our cabinet has publiſhed here, ſeems to have produced a very good effect upon the King, in deſpite of thoſe who exclaim---*Ne crede Teucris*--an adage which is become the ſignal of rallying, among the Engliſh, Dutch, Anti-French, &c. &c. May we conduct ourſelves ſo as never to admit of any other reproach.---This diſcovery will probably, both at Berlin and Deux Ponts, counteract the Emperor. It was very ill judged of him not to ſuffer that torpor to increaſe, which is the infallible conſequence of the languor of labour, or of the confuſion which doing nothing produces.

But I reſign theſe foreign politics to your ambaſſadors, to whom they are known, becauſe I gained this intelligence by that means only by which I gain all other; becauſe Count d'Eſt * * did not ſay a word on the ſubject to me; becauſe it would have been weak and little decent to have put many queſtions, on a matter which I ought to have known; and becauſe I therefore ſatisfied myſelf with vague annotations, on our fidelity. I am not and probably ſhall not be circumſtantially informed of the affair. You perhaps may feel on this occaſion how important it is that better intelligence ſhould be ſent me from Verſailles; but you will doubtleſs acknowledge I perform all I can, all I ought, when I trace the outlines of internal, ſince I have not the key to external politics. Though aſſuredly I ſhall not neglect the latter, whenever lucky chance ſhall afford opportunities.

The libelliſt Crantz, who was expelled the country by Frederic II. for theft, and for having ſold the ſame horſe three times, is recalled, with a penſion of eight hundred crowns. The King wrote to

Count Hertzberg to give him ſome poſt. The miniſter replied that the abilities of the gentleman were great, and that he was very eſtimable, but that he had too little diſcretion to be employed in foreign affairs. The King propoſed him to the miniſter Werder, who anſwered, the gentleman was exceedingly intelligent, exceedingly capable, but that there was money in his office, which therefore Mr. Crantz muſt not be ſuffered to enter. At laſt, the King has thrown the illuſtrious Crantz, praiſed by all and by all rejected, upon the ſtates; and he receives a penſion of eight hundred crowns, for doing nothing.

The miniſter Schulemburg, after having twice demanded his diſmiſſion, has finally obtained it, without a penſion. This is ſevere, but the ex-miniſter is adroit. He has caſt all the burthen upon the firſt branch of his department, which has been retrenched. If there are any means of being reſtored, this was well done. You are acquainted with the qualities of this man. He had underſtanding, facility, and ſagacity in the choice of his coadjutors; was indifferent concerning the means he employed; vain in proſperity; deſpairing in misfortune, of which his feelings are the ſport; ready to ſerve others; ſuſceptible of affection; and believing in friendſhip after having been fifteen years miniſter of Frederic II. He thought himſelf immoveable becauſe he was neceſſary, and hopes that this neceſſity will ſurmount the cabals by which he has been driven from his poſt. Perhaps he deceives himſelf; for, while we are not difficult in our choice, and when the buſineſs is not of itſelf beyond vulgar capacities, agents may at any time be found. If monarchs wiſh for a Newton, they certainly muſt employ a Newton, or the place muſt remain vacant. But who is there who does not think himſelf capable of being a miniſter; and of whom may it be demonſtrated he is not capable?

I am aſſured, from a good quarter, that Count Hertzberg regains confidence. He has bowed to the new agents, who have had the weakneſs to bring him again into favour, becauſe that Mademoiſelle Voſs is the niece of Count Finckenſtein, and becauſe, her family being unable to obtain any advantage by her promotion except by the overthrow of those who ſurround the King, who are not ignorant that the lady deteſts them, it is requiſite ſome one ſhould be oppoſed to her. But, if ſhe be a dame of mettle, change muſt be looked for on that ſide, which more or leſs addreſs will haſten or retard. Whether or no, Hertzberg has adviſed Count Goertz to take part with Renneval, of whoſe prudence he has ſpoken in the higheſt terms to the King.

A new blunder has been committed in the military. All the firſt lieutenants have been made captains; and the captains, whether on whole or half pay, of the regiment of guards, are advanced to the rank of major. Except the war-chancery, I do not ſee who will be the gainer by this arrangement. It is ſaid the King intends to pay his perſonal debts; the payment of which, by the way of parentheſis, is more than ever eluded, with the produce of the commiſſions of officers, and the diplomas of counts, barons, chamberlains, &c.

The plan for the capitation-tax was repreſented to the King as a kind of voluntary act, and which the people themſelves would meet half way; but, informed of the public diſguſt this project had occaſioned, alarmed by the rumour, and heated by the letter of Heinitz, he told Werder—"People ought not to "meddle with matters they do not un"derſtand."—(Take good note that this he ſaid to his miniſter of finance) "Lau"nay ſhould have been conſulted."—(Now under the fetters of the commiſſion of enquiry). Werder excuſed himſelf in the beſt manner he could, by ſaying the plan did not originate with him (in fact the project was Beyer's), as if he had not appropriated by approving it.

The general directory, that ſpecies of council of ſtate, at which the King is never preſent, has projected remonſtrances concerning the humiliating inactivity in which it is held; but Welner oppoſed them, giving the invincible repugnance of his Majeſty for every ſpecies of advice to be underſtood. This ariſes from the ſtrange ſuppoſition that thoſe who give him advice have adopted the ſentiments of his uncle, relative to his capacity. He is yet to learn that no one ventures to adviſe among the great, except ſuch perſons as they eſteem.

In the mean time the myſtics continue in the ſame degree of favour. Their conſpiracy was denounced, by the great perſon whom I ſpoke of to you in my laſt, to General Moellendorf, the intimate friend of the brother of Mademoiſelle Voſs—(a man eſteemed for his moral character; in other reſpects obſcure, at leaſt hitherto, yet who probably will ſoon appear upon the ſtage)—in order that he might terrify his ſiſter, and by her intervention the Sovereign, concerning the crimes of a ſect who would ſacrifice all whom they cannot rule. Bieſter, the ſame, to ſay the leaſt, to whom it has been inſinuated that he ſhould ſpare the myſtics, has a law-ſuit in which they are intereſted, which it is ſaid he will loſe. He has accuſed Mr. Starck of being a Catholic. Starck is a profeſſor of Jena, a man celebrated for the gift of perſuaſion, as well as for his underſtanding and knowledge, a Lutheran born and a Lutheran miniſter, but a known profeſſor of the Catholic religion. He has notwithſtanding inſtituted a criminal action againſt Bieſter, for having ſaid this, and has ſummoned him to prove his calumnious aſſertion. Never would ſuch a ſuit have been heard of under Frederic II. Starck has recently publiſhed a book, intitled *Nicaiſe*, in which he attacks free-maſonry. The free-maſons have replied by another, intitled *Anti-Nicaiſe*, in which are inſerted authentic letters from ſeveral princes; and, among others, from Prince Charles of Heſſe Caſſel, and Prince Ferdinand of Brunſwic; which well prove, what all know who have converſed with him, ſhould they not likewiſe know his creatures,

tures, Bauer and Wetsfall, that a great general, or rather a *famous* general, may be a very little man.

The ſtatement of the expence is at length made out, and the reſult is that the King may increaſe his treaſury by two millions of crowns, and ſtill reſerve a conſiderable ſum for his pleaſures or his affections. But, in this calculation, it is ſuppoſed that following receipts will equal the preceding, which certainly is doubtful. One paternal act has been performed; the country people have been freed from the obligation of lodging the cavalry gratis, and ſupplying forage at a very low price. This reform will coſt the King two hundred and ſeventy thouſand crowns per annum. But it was extremely neceſſary. It is the reſult of the plan of Moellendorf, for the abolition of the *green forage*.

One Mr. Moulinés is the editor of the manuſcripts of the late King. I have before given you his political character; and, as a literary man, he is deſtitute of taſte and diſcernment, and without any profound knowledge of the language. But he is the friend of Welner; of that Welner to whom the King, at ſeven o'clock in the morning, ſends the letters and requeſts of the day before, and who at four o'clock goes to give in his account, or rather to inſtruct the King. As for the miniſters, they receive orders, and do not give advice. Welner has had the wit to refuſe the title of miniſter, and to ſatisfy himſelf with that of ſuperintendant of the buildings; but he is already fawned upon by the whole court. Theſe manuſcripts are to be printed in eighteen volumes octavo. The two parts moſt curious are the Hiſtory of the Seven Years War, and the Memoirs of my own Times (*f*). In the former, Frederic has

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(*f*) The publication has proved the author was miſtaken. The letters are the moſt curious part of the work. There are few things in the hiſtory that were not known before; except that it exhibits the character of this extraordinary man, as drawn by himſelf, to thoſe who are capable of diſcovering that character; and in this particular the letters are perhaps ſtill ſuperior. T.

rather recounted what he ought to have done than what he did; and this is itſelf a trait of genius. He praiſes or excuſes almoſt every body; and blames only himſelf (*g*).

The Marquis of Luccheſini, who had been, not the friend, not the favourite of Frederic, but his *liſtener*, is, though he does not own it, highly piqued at the choice made of Moulinés. He has demanded leave of abſence, for ſix months, to make a journey into his own country, from which no doubt he will no more return. How did it happen that he did not feel that the perſonal reſpect in which he would have been held would have been immenſe, had he quitted Pruſſia a week after the death of the King, with this only reply to all the offers which would have been made him?—"I was ambitious only of a place "which all the kings on earth could not

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(*g*) It is plain the author had never read the work, which was not then publiſhed. T.

" take from me, cannot reſtore: that " of being the friend of Frederic II."

Two ſucceſſors have been appointed to Count Schulemburg; for, as the King of France has four miniſters, twenty are neceſſary to the King of Pruſſia. One of theſe ſucceſſors is Mr. Moſchwitz, a magiſtrate; of whom neither good nor harm is ſpoken. The other is a Count Schulemburg von Blumbert, the ſon-in-law of Count Finckenſtein. The latter poſſeſſes knowledge, an ardent and gloomy ambition, and a moral character that is ſuſpected. He is ſtudious, intelligent, aſſiduous, and is certainly a capable man. But he is ſuppoſed to want order; to poſſeſs rather a heated brain than an active mind; and to have more opinions of his own than dexterity to blend them with the opinions of others, and render them ſucceſsful. Neither is he at all accuſtomed to buſineſs; and is an abſolute ſtranger to banking and commercial ſpeculations: that is to ſay, to the principal branches of his department.

1ſt PS. The King, who is paying off the debts of his father, has granted twenty thouſand crowns for the maintenance and privy purſe of his two eldeſt ſons. Their houſehold is a ſeparate expence.

2nd PS. I did not believe I was ſo good a prophet. The brother of Mademoiſelle Voſs has the place of the preſident Moſchwitz. This is the foot in the ſtirrup.

The courſe of exchange, on Amſterdam, is ſo exceedingly high that, there being no operation of finance or of commerce by which it may be accounted for, I have no doubt but remittances are made there, to pay off the perſonal debts of the King. Struenſee is of the ſame opinion; but he has no poſitive intelligence on the ſubject.

LETTER LIV.

December 8th, 1786.

YOU may take it for granted that there are three principal ſhades, in the character of the King; deceit, which he believes to be art; iraſcible vanity, whenever the leaſt remonſtrance is made to him; and the accumulation of money, which is not ſo much avarice in him as the paſſion of poſſeſſing. The firſt of theſe vices has rendered him ſuſpicious; for he who deceives by ſyſtem continually imagines he is deceived. The ſecond induces him to prefer people of middling, or inferior abilities; and the latter contributes to make him lead an obſcure and ſolitary life, by which the two former are ſtrengthened. Violent in private; impenetrable in public; little animated by the love of fame in reality, and making this love to conſiſt chiefly in leading the world to ſuppoſe he is not governed;

rarely troubling himſelf with foreign politics; a ſoldier from neceſſity, and not from inclination; diſpoſed to favour the myſtics, not from conviction, but becauſe he believes he ſhall, by their aid, examine the conſciences, and penetrate the hearts of men——Such is the outline of the man.

His debts will be paid by the ſurplus money. Under the late King there was annually a conſiderable ſum which was not brought to the treaſury, but was kept apart to raiſe new regiments, to increaſe the artillery, or to repair the fortreſſes. Now, as the artillery was not increaſed, as new regiments were not raiſed, and as the fortreſſes were not repaired, the money conſequently accumulated. It is now employed in liquidation.

The revenues are upward of twenty-ſeven millions of crowns, including the cuſtoms; or about a hundred and eight millions of French livres (four millions and a half ſterling). The expence of the army is twelve millions and a half of crowns; of the civil adminiſtration, two millions three hundred thouſand crowns; of the King's, the Queen's, and the Princes' houſehold, one million two hundred thouſand crowns; and a hundred and thirty thouſand for the payment of penſions. I am not acquainted with all the inferior expences; but when, for example, we know that the legation cheſt does not abſorb more than ſeventy-five thouſand crowns, and that the ſupplements amount on an average to twenty-five thouſand crowns—(On which I have to remark that the ſame object in Denmark coſts three millions of crowns; and in Ruſſia, a country almoſt unknown to the greateſt part of Europe, three hundred thouſand rubles.)—it is eaſy to underſtand that the ſum total of the annual ſurplus, the expence being deducted from the receipt, is about three millions and a half of crowns.

The manufacturers have preſented a petition, in which they ſupplicate to be informed whether any alterations are intended to be made in the privileges granted them by the late King, or his predeceſſors, that they may not be expoſed to the buying of materials, or contracting agreements, which they ſhall be unable to fulfil. Frederic William has given his word of honour not to make any change, at preſent, of this kind.

I have already ſaid that the King intended to have made Welner a miniſter, which dignity it is affirmed he refuſed. This for many reaſons was a maſterſtroke, by which he will be no loſer; for he has lately been granted an augmentation of three thouſand crowns, that he may enjoy the ſame penſion as the miniſters of ſtate. The King not only places no confidence in the latter, but he affects never to mention them; unleſs it be to Count Finckenſtein, the uncle of the well-beloved; or to Count Arnim, who interferes in the negociations of the ſo much deſired marriage; and who is at preſent too much a ſtranger to buſineſs to be ſuſpected of any ſyſtem. The ſuppoſition that he has one will, at leaſt for ſome time, be the rock on which the new Schulemburg is liable to be wrecked. He is ſupported by ſtrength of character, and ardour of ambition. As to the new preſident, to whom already is attributed a depth of deſign which probably he never poſſeſſed, I believe him little capable of enacting any great part.

The Sieur du Boſc, who is become a counſellor of finance and of commerce, is alſo deſirous of making his entrance. He has petitioned to be employed in the cuſtoms, and his requeſt has been granted, but without an increaſe of reſpect. Speculators, joining this ſymptom to ſome others, have drawn a concluſion that this is ſome diminution in the credit of Biſhopſwerder, his protector. The party of the myſtics however does but augment, and flouriſh. To own the truth, the crowd of candidates may injure individuals. One of the moſt zealous members, Drenthal, is lately arrived. No office was found for him, under the King; but he has in the interim been placed with the Princeſs Amelia, in quality of marſhal of the court, with a promiſe of not being forgotten, at the death of this princeſs, whoſe end approaches.

Our knowledge of the new Sovereign may be increaſed, by a ſketch of the moſt diſtinguiſhed people at his court. Among theſe are an old count (Lendorf), gentle as Philinta, obliging as Bonneau (*h*), a ſhameleſs flatterer, an unfaithful tale-bearer, and, when need is, a calumniator. .....A prince in his pupillage (Holſtein-beck), ſmoking his pipe, drinking brandy, never knowing what he ſays, ever talking on what he does not underſtand, ready at any time to fly to the parade, to hunt, to go to church, to go to brothels, or to go to ſupper with a lieutenant, a laquais, or Madam Rietz.....Another prince (Frederic of Brunſwic), famous for the pains he took to diſhonour his ſiſter, and particularly his brother-in-law, the preſent King; a libertine under the Monarch who was called an atheiſt; at preſent a myſtic, when the Monarch is ſuppoſed a devotee;

(*h*) See note in the firſt volume to *Counſellor Bonneau.* T.

devotee; a penſioner of the free-maſon lodges, from which he annually receives ſix thouſand crowns; talking nonſenſe from ſyſtem; and, for the ſecrets which he wreſts, returning a multitude of half ſecrets, which are partly invented and partly uſeleſs.·····A kind of mad captain (Grothaus), who has ſeen all, had all, done all, known all; the intimate friend of the Prince of Wales; the favourite of the King of England; invited by Congreſs to be their preſident, on condition of conquering Canada; maſter at pleaſure of the Cape of Good Hope; the only man capable of ſettling the affairs of Holland; an author, a dancer, a runner, a jumper; farmer, botaniſt, phyſician, chemiſt, and lieutenant-colonel in the Pruſſian ſervice, with an income of ſeven hundred crowns per annum.—A miniſter (Count Arnim), who dreams inſtead of thinking, ſmiles inſtead of replying, reaſons inſtead of determining, regrets at night the liberty he ſacrificed in the morning, and wiſhes at once to remain indolent on his eſtate and to acquire the reputation of a miniſter.—A reigning prince (the Duke of Weimar), who imagines he has wit, becauſe he can interpret a rebus; is cunning, becauſe he pretends to ſwallow his own ſarcaſms; a philoſopher, becauſe he has three poets at his court; and a ſpecies of hero, becauſe he rides full ſpeed in ſearch of wolves and boars.——Such being his favourites judge of the man.

Do you wiſh to eſtimate his taſte by his diverſions?——Tueſday was the great day on which he went to enjoy the pleaſures of the imagination, at the German theatre! Here, in grand pomp, he was accoſted by a dramatic compliment, which concluded with theſe words:—"May "that kind Providence that rewards all, "all great and good actions, bleſs and "preſerve our moſt gracious King, that "auguſt father of his people; bleſs and "preſerve all the royal houſe; and bleſs "and preſerve us all! *Amen!*"—The King was ſo highly enchanted, with this dramatic homily, that he has added another thouſand crowns, to the five thouſand

ſand which he had granted the manager, and has made him a preſent of four chandeliers, and twelve glaſſes to decorate the boxes. Sarcaſms innumerable, on the French theatre, accompanied this act of generoſity.

Would you judge him by military favours?—A penſion of three hundred crowns has been granted to Captain Colas, who had been eight and twenty years impriſoned in the citadel of Magdeburg; and the rank of lieutenant-general beſtowed on Borck, his Majeſty's governor, who is eighty-two years of age.

Or by his court favours?—The chamberlain's key ſent to that extravagant Baron Bagge; who indeed preſented a hundred louis to Rietz, and forty to the perſon who brought him this gift of royal munificence.

It has been inſinuated to his Majeſty that he had diſpleaſed the citizens, on his return from Pruſſia; the army, from the firſt day of his reign; the general directory, by rendering it null; his family, by being polite inſtead of friendly; the prieſts, by his project of a third marriage; the penſioners, by the ſuppreſſion of the tobacco monopoly; the court, by the confuſion or the delay in the ſtatement of the accounts; and that therefore it might perhaps be imprudent, for the preſent, in the moment of efferveſcence, to accept of the ſtatue, that had been propoſed by the city of Königſberg.

Are you deſirous of an index to the reſpect in which he may be held by foreign nations?—The Poles have refuſed a paſſage to the horſes, for remounting the cavalry, coming from the Ukraine. I need not tell you ſuch a refuſal would never have been made to Frederic II.

Count Hertzberg pretends he has received letters written againſt himſelf, to perſons in France, by Prince Henry. He ſhewed them to the King, who made him no reply. I ſcarcely can believe there is not ſome fraud in this affair. I know the perſons to whom the Prince writes in France; and, treachery out of the queſtion, they certainly are not intereſted in favour of Count Hertzberg. But whether or no, there are rumours that Hertzberg and Blumenthal are ſoon to reſign; that the latter will be replaced by Mr. Voſs; and the firſt, who has imagined himſelf too neceſſary to be taken at his word,—"by a man who will aſtoniſh "the whole world." (This it is affirmed is the phraſe of the King himſelf.) Hertzberg has the knowledge of a civilian, and is well read in archives, becauſe his memory is prodigious. He alſo knows ſomething of practical agriculture. But, on the reverſe, he is violent, paſſionate, abundantly vain, and explains himſelf as he conceives, that is to ſay with difficulty and confuſion; is deſirous but incapable of doing that good by which reputation is acquired; rather vindictive than malignant; ſubject to prejudices; diſpoſed to injure thoſe againſt whom he is prejudiced; and devoid of dignity, addreſs, and reſource.

Blumenthal is a faithful accountant, an ignorant miniſter; ambitious, when he recollects ambition, and to pleaſe his family; and full of reſpect for the treaſury, which he places far above the ſtate; and of indifference for the King, whom he more than neglected, while he was Prince of Pruſſia.

The duty has been taken off beer, which yielded five hundred and fifty thouſand crowns per annum, and a ſubſtitute it is ſaid will be found by an additional tax on wines: but wines are already too much taxed, and cannot bear any ſuch increaſe. The expences of this part of the cuſtoms amount to twenty thouſand crowns; ſixty-nine perſons employed have been diſmiſſed; but their ſalaries are continued till they ſhall be replaced.

1ſt PS. Count Tottleben (a Saxon), who has been appointed major in the regiment of Elben, was preceded by a letter, the import of which was that he was ſent to the regiment *to learn the ſervice*. The equivoque of the expreſſion is ſtronger in the German. The regiment wrote in a body to the King—"If Count "Tottleben be ſent to inſtruct us, we "have not merited, nor will we endure, "ſuch humiliation. If he come for in- "ſtruction, he cannot ſerve as major." —Some pretend that the diſpute is already ſettled, and others that it will have conſequences.

The King about a month ſince was reminded of Captain Forcade, who was formerly a favourite of the Prince of Pruſſia. His Majeſty replied—"Let him "write what his wiſhes are." Forcade requeſted the happineſs of being one of his attendants. The King anſwered—"I "have no need of uſeleſs officers; they "only ſerve to make a duſt."

2nd PS. By the laſt courier I ſent you ſome calculations on the coins of Poland. Here follow others more abſurd, relative to thoſe of Denmark.

Denmark has adopted, according to law, the nominal value of its currency at 11 $\frac{1}{3}$ crowns for the fine mark of Cologn; yet it has for ſeveral years paid from thirteen to fourteen crowns the fine mark. Hence there are no ſilver coins in Denmark, and buſineſs is all tranſacted in bank bills, the value of which is never to be realized.

When the evil began to be evident, Schimmelmann wiſhed it might be remedied. He coined crowns in ſpecie $9\frac{1}{4}$ of which contained the fine mark, and calculated that the crown in ſpecie was equal to one crown $9\frac{37}{100}$ ſols (halfpence) currency *lubs*. The fact would have been true, if the ſilver currency had exiſted at $11\frac{1}{3}$ per mark; but as none ſuch were to be found, each perſon willingly accepted the crowns in ſpecie at one crown nine ſols currency; but no one was willing to give a crown in ſpecie for one crown nine ſols currency. The reſult was that all theſe fine crowns in ſpecie were melted down.

At preſent, now the evil is exceſſive, there is a wiſh to repeat a ſimilar operation, after the following manner.

I. Crowns in ſpecie are to be coined of $9\frac{1}{4}$ to a fine mark.

II. Bank bills are to be iſſued, which

are to repreſent crowns in ſpecie, and are to be realized or paid in ſpecie.

III. It is wiſhed to fix the value of theſe current crowns, in ſpecie, by an edict; and, as they could not coin the crown at the aſſay of a crown nine ſols without loſs, it is intended to raiſe their value.

If therefore the preſent currency of Denmark, that is to ſay the bank bills, have no real value, but their value conſiſts in the balance of payment of this kingdom (or the rate of exchange) as it ſhall be for or againſt Denmark, this operation will be equally abſurd with the former; for, if the bank ſhall pay crowns in ſpecie, in lieu of the ideal value of the currency, it will rid itſelf of its crowns in ſpecie, which will paſs through the crucible, and the former confuſion will continue to exiſt, or perhaps be increaſed to greater extravagance, by a new creation of bank bills repreſenting the ſpecie, which in like manner will, in a few months, be incapable of being realized.

3d PS. The new eſtabliſhment of the bank of ſpecie ſtill appears to be obſcure. It is intended to coin one million four hundred thouſand crowns in ſpecie, the ſilver for which ſhould be at Altona.

There have been great debates, in the council of ſtate, between the Prince of Auguſtemburg and the miniſter of ſtate, Roſencranz. The firſt requires the money ſhould be coined at Altona, and the latter at Copenhagen. It is ſaid that the miniſter intends on this occaſion to give in his reſignation.

Bank bills equal to the value of one million four hundred thouſand crowns are to be fabricated. This bank is to exchange the old bills of the Daniſh bank for the new bank bills, at a given rate.

Should this rate, as is very probable, be lower than the courſe of exchange, it would be an excellent manœuvre to buy up bank bills, at preſent, and afterward convert them into ſpecie.

LETTER LV.

December 12th, 1786.

THE true reaſon why the Duke of Weimar is ſo feaſted is becauſe he has undertaken to bring the Queen to conſent to the marriage of Mademoiſelle Voſs. The Queen laughed at the propoſal, and ſaid—"Yes, they ſhall have "my conſent; but they ſhall not have it "for nothing; on the contrary it ſhall "coſt them dear."—And they are now paying her debts, which amount to more than a hundred thouſand crowns; nor do I believe this will ſatisfy her. While the King of Pruſſia is abſorbed by meditations on this marriage, to me it appears evident that, if the Emperor be capable of a reaſonable plan, he is now wooing two wives, Bavaria and Sileſia.—Yes, Sileſia; for I do not think that ſo many manœuvres on the Danube can be any other than the domino of the maſquerade. But this is not the place in which he will make his firſt attempt. Every thing demonſtrates (and give me credit for beginning to know this part of Germany) that he will keep on the defenſive, on the ſide of Pruſſia, which he will ſuffer to exhauſt itſelf in efforts that he may freely advance on Bavaria; nor is it probable that he will trouble himſelf concerning the means of recovering Sileſia, till he has firſt made that immenſe acquiſition.

I ſay that he may freely advance; for, to ſpeak openly, what impediment can we lay in his way?. Omitting the million and one reaſons of indolence or impotence which I could allege, let it be ſuppoſed that we ſhould act—We ſhould take the Low Countries, and he Bavaria; we the Milaneſe, and he the republic of Venice. What of all this would ſave Sileſia? And what muſt ſoon after become of the Pruſſian power?—It will be ſaved by the faults of its neighbours.—It will fall! This grand fairy palace will come to the earth with a ſudden cruſh; or its government will undergo ſome revolution.

The King appears very tranquil concerning future contingencies. He is building near New Sans Souci, or rather repairing and furniſhing, a charming houſe which formerly belonged to the Lord Marſhal, and which is deſtined for Mademoiſelle Voſs. The Princeſs of Brunſwic has requeſted to have a houſe at Potſdam; and the King has beſtowed that on her which he inhabited as Prince Royal, which he is furniſhing at his own expence. It is evident that this expiring Princeſs, crippled by David's diſeaſe, and conſumed by inanity, is to be lady of honour to Mademoiſelle Voſs.

The debts of the Queen Dowager, the reigning Queen, the Prince Royal, now become King, and of ſome other complaiſant people, male and female, are paid; and, if we add to theſe ſums the penſions that have been beſtowed, the houſes that have been furniſhed, and the offices that have been created, we ſhall find the amount to be tolerably large. This is the true way to be prodigal without being generous. To this article it may be added that the King has given to Meſſrs. Blumenthal, Gaudi, and Heinitz, miniſters of ſtate, each a bailliage. This is a new mode of making a preſent of a thouſand louis. A-propos of the laſt of theſe miniſters; the King has replied to ſeveral perſons employed in the department of the mines, who had complained of being ſuperſeded, that hereafter there ſhall be no claims of ſeniority.

He has terminated the affair of the Duke of Mecklenburg with ſome ſlight modifications.

He has given a miraculous kind reception to General Count Kalckreuth; he who was aide de camp to and principal agent of Prince Henry; who quarrelled with him outrageouſly for the Princeſs; and whom Frederic II. kept at a diſtance that he might not too openly embroil himſelf with his brother. Kalckreuth is a man of great merit, and an officer of the firſt claſs; but the affectation with

which he has been diſtinguiſhed by the king appears to me to be directed againſt his uncle; perhaps too there may be a mingled wiſh of reconciling himſelf to the army; but, ſhould Count Bruhl perſiſt in aſſuming, not only the rank which has been granted him but that likewiſe of ſeniority, which will ſuperſede all the generals, with Moellendorf at their head, I believe the diſſatisfaction will be paſt remedy. All that is of little conſequence while peace ſhall continue, and perhaps would be the ſame, were war immediately declared, for a year to come; but, in proceſs of time, that which has been ſown ſhall be reaped. It is a ſtrange kind of calculation which ſpreads diſcontent through an excellent army by favours and military diſtinctions, beſtowed on a race of men who have always been ſuch indifferent warriors. * * * * * *
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Not that I pretend to affirm there

are not brave and intelligent men in the ſervice of Saxony. There are, for example, two at preſent, very much diſtinguiſhed; Captain Tielke of the artillery (*i*), whom Frederic wiſhed to gain but could not, though he offered him the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and an appointment of two thouſand crowns; and Count Bellegarde, who is ſaid to be one of the moſt able officers in the world. But theſe are not the perſons whom they have gained for the Pruſſian ſervice. Hitherto, in all the Saxon promotions, the thing conſulted was the noble merit of being devoted to *the ſect*, or that of being recommended by Biſhopſwerder.

PS. I forgot to mention to you that Count d'Eſt ** had, at my interceſſion, addreſſed the Count de Vergennes, on

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(*i*) Well known to officers for his military hiſtory of the war of 1756, which has been tranſlated from the German into ſeveral of the European languages. T.

the propoſition of inviting M. de la Grange into France. It will be highly worthy of Mr. de Calonne to remove those money difficulties which Mr. de Br** will not fail to raiſe.

LETTER

December 16th, 1786.

GENERAL Count Kalckreuth continues to be in favour. It is a ſubject worthy of obſervation, that, ſhould this favour be durable, ſhould advantage be taken of the very great abilities of this gentleman, and ſhould he be appointed to ſome place of importance, the King will then ſhew he is not an enemy to underſtanding; he is not jealous of the merit of others; nor does he mean to keep all men of known talents at a diſtance. This will prove the myſtics do not enjoy the excluſive privilege of royal favour. But all theſe deductions, I imagine, are premature; for, although Kalckreuth is the only officer of the army who has hitherto been thus diſtinguiſhed; although he himſelf had conceived hopes he ſhould be; although his merit is of the firſt order; Moellendorf having placed himſelf at the head of the malecontents, which the King will never pardon; Pritwitz being only a brave and inconſiderate ſoldier, the ridiculous echo of Moellendorf; Anhalt a madman; Gaudi almoſt impotent, becauſe of his ſize, and lying likewiſe under the imputation of a defect in perſonal bravery, which occaſioned Frederic II. to ſay of him—"He is a good profeſſor; but, when "the boys are to repeat the leſſons they "have learned, he is never to be found." —Although his other rivals are too young, and too inexperienced, to give him any uneaſineſs; in deſpite of all this, I ſay, I ſcarcely can imagine but that the principal cauſe of the diſtinction with which the King has treated him was the deſire of humbling Prince Henry. At leaſt I am very intimate with Kalckreuth, of whom I made a tolerably ſure conqueſt at the reviews of Magdeburg, and I have reaſon to believe that I know every thing which has paſſed between him and the King; in all which I do not perceive, not only any thing concluſive, but, any thing of great promiſe.

The King ſupports his capitation-tax. It is ſaid it will be fixed according to the following rates. A lieutenant-general, a miniſter of ſtate, or the widow of one of theſe, at about twelve crowns, or forty-eight French livres (two pounds ſterling); a major-general, or a privy-counſellor, at ten crowns; a chamberlain, or colonel, eight; a gentleman ſix; a peaſant, who holds lands in good provinces, three; a half-peaſant (a peaſant who holds lands has thirty acres, a half-peaſant ten) a crown twelve groſchen. In the poor provinces, a peaſant two crowns, a half-peaſant one.

Coffee hereafter is only to pay one groſchen per pound, and tobacco the ſame. The general directory has received a memorial on the ſubject ſo ſtrongly to the purpoſe that, although anonymous, it has been officially read, after which it was formally copied to be ſent to the tobacco adminiſtration, in order to have certain facts verified. The ſtep appeared to be ſo bold that the formal copy, or protocole, was only ſigned by four miniſters; Meſſrs. Hertzberg, Arnim, Heinitz, and Schulemburg von Blumberg.

The merchants deputized by the city of Königſberg have written that, if ſalt is to continue to be monopolized by the maritime company, it will be uſeleſs for them to come to Berlin; for they can only be the bearers of grievances, without knowing what to propoſe. It is aſſerted, in conſequence, that the maritime company will loſe the monopoly of ſalt. This intelligence, to ſay the leaſt, is very premature. Salt is an exceedingly important article; and Struenſee, who has exerted his whole faculties to ſecure it to himſelf, has been ſo perfectly ſucceſsful that he ſells five thouſand laſts of ſalt; twenty-eight muids conſtituting nine laſts. (The muid is one hundred and forty-four buſhels.) *

I aſk once again, if the maritime company is to be deprived of its moſt lucrative monopolies, how can it afford to pay ten per cent for a capital of twelve hundred thouſand crowns? When an edifice, the ſummit of which is ſo lofty and the baſis ſo narrow, is once raiſed, before any part of it ſhould be demoliſhed, it were very neceſſary to conſult concerning the props by which the remainder is to be ſupported. The King has declared that he will render trade perfectly free, if any means can be found of not leſſening the revenue. Is not this declaration pleaſantly benevolent? I think I hear Job on his dunghill exclaiming—“I conſent to “be cured of all my ulcers, and to be reſtored to perfect health, provided you “will not give me any phyſic, and will “not ſubject me to any regimen.”

The munificence is ſomewhat ſimilar to that which ſhall reſtore freedom to all the merchandize of France, by obliging it to pay exceſſive heavy duties, the produce of which ſhall be applied to the encouragement of ſuch manufactures as ſhall be ſuppoſed capable of rivalling the manufactures of foreign nations. I know not whether the King imagines he has conferred a great benefit on trade; but I know that throughout Europe all contraband commerce is become a mere article of inſurance, the premium of which is more or leſs according to local circumſtances; and that therefore a heavy duty (with reſpect to the revenue) is equivalent to a prohibition.

The King has ordered his ſubjects to be numbered, that he may not only know their number but their age and ſex. Probably the changes which are projected to be made in the army are to be the reſult of this enumeration. But we know how difficult all ſuch numberings are in every country upon earth. Another affair is in agitation, of a much more delicate nature, and which ſuppoſes a general plan and great fortitude; which is a land-tax on the eſtates of the nobles. The project begins to tranſpire, and the provincial counſellors have received orders to ſend certain informations, tion, which ſeem to have this purpoſe in view. I will believe it is accompliſhed when I ſee it.

Single and diſtinct facts are of leſs importance to you than an intimate knowledge of him who governs. All the characters of weakneſs are united to thoſe I have ſo often deſcribed. Spies already are employed; informers are made welcome; thoſe who remonſtrate meet anger, and the ſincere are repulſed or driven to a diſtance. Women only preſerve the right of ſaying what they pleaſe. There has lately been a private concert, at which Madam Hencke, or Rietz, for you know that this is one and the ſame perſon, was preſent, and ſtood behind a ſcreen. Some noiſe was heard at the door. A valet de chambre half opened it, and there found the Princeſs Frederica of Pruſſia, and Mademoiſelle Voſs. The firſt made a ſign for him to be ſilent. The valet de chambre diſobeyed. The King inſtantly roſe, and introduced the two ladies. Some minutes afterward, a noiſe was again heard, behind the ſcreen. The King appeared to be embarraſſed. Mademoiſelle Voſs aſked what it was. Her royal lover replied—"Nothing but my people."—The two ladies however had quitted the Queen's card-table to indulge this pretty whim. The King was making a joke of the matter, on the morrow, when one of the ladies of the palace who was preſent ſaid to him—"The thing is very true, "Sire; but it were to be wiſhed that it "were not."—Another lady aſked him, the other day, at table—"But why, Sire, "are all the letters opened at the poſt-"office? It is a very ridiculous and very "odious proceeding."

He was told that the German plays, which he protects very much, are not good—"Granted," replied he; "but "better theſe than a French play-houſe, "which would fill Berlin with huſſies, "and corrupt the manners of the peo-"ple."—From which no doubt you would conclude that the German actreſſes are Lucretias. You muſt alſo eſpecially admire the morality of this protector of morals, who goes to ſup in the houſe of his former miſtreſs with three women, and makes a procureſs of his daughter.

He troubles himſelf as little with foreign politics as if he were intirely ſecure from all poſſible tempeſts. He ſpeaks in panegyrics of the Emperor, of the French always with a ſneer, of the Engliſh with reſpect. The fact is the man appears to be nothing; leſs than nothing; and I fear leſt thoſe diverſions which may be made in his favour are exaggerated. I ſhall on this occaſion notice that the Duke de Deux Ponts eſcapes us; but he unites himſelf the cloſer to the Germanic-league, which has ſo high an opinion of itſelf that it really believes it does not ſtand in need of our aid. Under the ſtandard of what chief it has acquired this preſumption Heaven knows!

There is an anecdote which to me is prophetical, but the force of which you will not feel, for want of knowing the country. Prince Ferdinand has received the fifty thouſand crowns which were due to him, according to the will of the

King, on the ſimple order of Werder, conceived in theſe words:—"His Ma-"jeſty has given me his verbal command "to lay down the fifty thouſand crowns "to your highneſs, which will be paid to "you or your order, by the treaſury, at "ſight. Welner."—An order for fifty thouſand crowns, to be paid down, ſigned by any other than the King, is a monſtroſity in the political regulations of Pruſſia.

Erect a bank, and bleſſings be upon you; for it is the ſole reſource for finance, which would not be horribly burthenſome; the only money-machine which, inſtead of borrowing with dearneſs and difficulty, will cauſe you to receive; the only corner-ſtone on which, under preſent circumſtances, the baſis of the power of the miniſter of finance can be ſupported. Struenſee, who is more ſtiff in the ſtirrups than ever, ſince he muſt neceſſarily become the profeſſor of the new miniſtry, has charged me to inform you that the King will probably purchaſe ſhares to the amount of ſeveral millions,

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if you will ſend him (Struenſee) an abſtract of the regulations of the bank, according to which he may make his report and propoſals.

Apropos of Struenſee, with whom I am daily more intimate. He has deſired me to inform you that the change of the commandite (*k*) for the dealing in piaſtres will very powerfully lower your exchange; and the following is his reaſoning to prove his aſſertion.

"The remonſtrances of the bank of "St. Charles to preſerve the remittances of the court, on commiſſion, "at the rate of ten per cent, have "been entirely rejected; it has only "been able to obtain them on ſpeculation, and on the conditions propoſed by "the *Gremios* (*l*); that is to ſay at an intereſt of ſix per cent for the money "advanced.

"The ſame bank has lately changed

(*k*) Money-agents.

(*l*) A company of Spaniſh merchants ſo called. T.

“ the commandite at Paris for the piaſtre “ buſineſs, and has ſubſtituted the houſe “ of Le Normand to that of Le Couteulx. As the former does not at preſent poſſeſs ſo extenſive a credit as the “ latter, many people foreſee that the “ Spaniſh bank will be under the neceſſity of keeping a greater ſupply of ready “ money with their commandite.

“ In the interim, it has found itſelf extremely diſtreſſed. Deſirous of ſettling “ its accounts with the houſe of Le Couteulx, and other houſes in France, it “ was in want of the ſum of three millions of French livres (a hundred and “ twenty-five thouſand pounds ſterling). “ To obtain this, it addreſſed itſelf to “ government, and endeavouring to call “ in ſixty millions of reals (*m*) which “ were its due. Government having, “ under various pretences, declined payment, the bank declared itſelf inſolvent, and that it muſt render the ſtate

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(*m*) The intrinſic value of the real according to the mint aſſay is five pence $\frac{1}{8}$. T.

" of its affairs public. This means produced its effect; government came to its aid, and gave it aſſignments for twenty millions of reals, payable annually."

LETTER LVII.

December 19, 1786.

THE comedy, which Prince Henry had promiſed the world every Monday, had its firſt repreſentation on yeſterday evening. The King came, contrary to the expectation of the Prince, and highly amuſed himſelf. I was a cloſe obſerver of royalty, as you may ſuppoſe. It is incontrovertibly the cup of Circe which muſt be preſented, in order to ſeduce him, but filled rather with beer than tokay. One remark ſufficiently curious, which I made, was that Prince Henry amuſed himſelf for his own perſonal pleaſure, and was not ſubject to the leaſt abſence of mind; neither of politics nor of attention to his gueſts. All the foreign miniſters were preſent, but I was the only ſtranger who ſtaid to ſupper; and the King, who, when the comedy was over, behaved all the evening with great reſerve, except when ſome burſt of laughter was forced from him by the obſcene jeſts of Prince Frederic of Brunſwic, contemplated me with an eye more than cold. He is inceſſantly irritated againſt me by ſpeeches which are made *for me*; and the moſt harmleſs of my acquaintance are repreſented as perſonally offenſive to his Majeſty. For my own part, I am perfectly the reverſe of diſconſolate on the ſubject. I only notice this that I may deſcribe my preſent ſituation, exactly as it is, without any hypocriſy.

It is true that Count Hertzberg has been on the point of loſing his place; the occaſion of which was what follows. He had announced the promiſed arrangement to the Duke of Mecklenburg, notwithſtanding which the affair was not expedited. Driven beyond his patience, and impatience in him is always brutal, he one day ſaid to the members of the General Directory—“ Gentlemen, you "muſt proceed a little faſter, buſineſs "is not done thus; this is a ſtate which "can only proceed with activity."—An account was given to the King of this vehement apoſtrophe. The Sovereign warmly reprimanded his miniſter, who offered to reſign. Blumenthal, it is ſaid, accommodated the affair.

Apropos of the Duke of Mecklenburg; the King, when he received his thanks for the reſtitution of his bailliages, ſaid to him,—"I have done nothing more "than my duty; read the device of my "order."—*Suum cuique.* (*n*)——The Poles, when the Pruſſian arms were erected to denote the limits of the frontiers, after diſmemberment by the late King, added *rapuit* to the motto. (*o*) I do not imagine Frederic William will ever give occaſion to a ſimilar epigram.

A very remarkable incident in the hiſtory of the human heart was the following. After various retrenchments

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(*n*) To every one his own.

(*o*) *Suum cuique rapuit.* He took from every one his own.

had been made upon this Duke, eſpecially in the promiſes that had been given him, one of the courtiers repreſented to the King, that he would not be ſatisfied.——"Well," ſaid his Majeſty, "then we muſt give him a yellow "ribband;"—and accordingly yeſterday the yellow ribband was given. The vain-glorious Duke at this moment found the arrangement of the bailliages perfectly ſatisfactory, and this was the occaſion of his coming to return thanks.

Would you wiſh to obtain a tolerably juſt idea of the manner of living, in this noble *tennis-court*, *(p)* called the court of Berlin? If ſo, pay ſome attention to the following traits, and recollect that I could collect a hundred of the ſame ſpecies.

The Princeſs Frederica of Pruſſia is now nineteen, and her apartment is open at eleven

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(p) Tripot. The juſt value of the Author's word ſeems to be ſhow-booth. Tennis-courts were formerly hired in France by rope-dancers, tumblers, and ſhowmen; in which we muſt not omit the alluſion to the debauchery of manners of ſuch people in France. T.

eleven every morning. The Dukes of Weimar, Holſtein, and Mecklenburg, all ill-bred libertines, go in and out of it two or three times in the courſe of the forenoon.

The Duke of Mecklenburg was recounting I know not what tale to the King. The Prince of Brunſwic, awkwardly enough, trod on the toe of a perſon preſent, to make him take notice of ſomething which he thought ridiculous. The Duke ſtopped ſhort in his diſcourſe—" I believe, Sir, you are " diverting yourſelf at my expence."—He went on with his converſation to the King, and preſently ſtopped again—" I " have long, Sir, been acquainted with " the venom of your tongue; if you " have any thing to ſay, ſpeak it to my " face, and I ſhall anſwer you."—More converſation and other interruptions.—" When I am gone, Sire, the Prince will " paint me in charming colours; I beg " your Majeſty will recollect what has " juſt paſſed."

This ſame Prince Frederic is, as I have very often told you, the chief of the myſtics, againſt whom he uttered the moſt horrid things to Baron Knyphauſen.— "But how is this, my Lord?" replied the Baron: "I underſtood you were the "pope of that church."—"It is falſe."— "I have too good an opinion of your ho"neſty to imagine you can be of a ſect "which you diſavow; I therefore give "you my promiſe every where to declare "you deſpiſe the myſtics too much to be "one of them; and thus you will reco"ver your reputation."—The Prince beat about the buſh, and called off his dogs.

A courtier, a grand marſhal of the court, petitions for a place promiſed to five candidates. I remarked to him— "But how, Sir, if the place be engag"ed?"—"Oh, engagements are nothing "at preſent," anſwered he gravely; "for "this month paſt we have left off keep"ing our word."

Welner, the real author of the diſgrace of Schulemburg, went to ſee him, pitied him, and ſaid—"You have too "much merit not to have many enemies." —"I, many enemies, Sir!" ſaid the ex-miniſter; "I know of but three, Prince "Frederic, becauſe I would not give his "huntſman a place; Biſhopſwerder, be-"cauſe I diſmiſſed one of his dependents; "and you, becauſe——I know not why." Welner began to weep, and to ſwear that detraction was every where rending his character.—"Tears are unworthy of "men," ſaid Schulemburg; "and I am "unable to thank you for yours."

In a word all is ſunken to the diminutive, as all was exalted to the grand.

It is aſſerted that the Pruſſian merchants will be allowed a free trade in ſalt and wax. I cannot verify the fact to-day; Struenſee will be too much occupied, it being poſt day; but if it be true the maritime company, which at once will be deprived of ſalt, wax, coffee, tobacco, and probably of wood, cannot longer ſupport the burthen of eighteen per cent at the leaſt; a profit which no ſolid trade can afford, and which perhaps Schulemburg himſelf, with all his lucrative excluſive privileges, could not have paid, but by perplexing the treaſury accounts, ſo that the gains of one branch concealed the deficiencies of another.

As to the ſilk manufactures, which are propoſed to be laid aſide, I do not perceive that any inconvenience whatever will reſult from this. An annual bounty of forty thouſand rix-dollars (ſix thouſand two hundred and fifty pounds ſterling) divided among the maſter weavers of Berlin, added to the prohibition of foreign ſilks, will never enable them to maintain a competition. Nay, as I have before explained to you, the very manufacturers themſelves ſmuggle, and thus ſupply more than one-third of the ſilks that are uſed in the country; for it is eaſy to conceive that purchaſers will prefer the beſt ſilks, which have more ſubſtance than, and are of ſuperior workmanſhip to, thoſe which monopoly would oblige them to buy. Not that the raw materials coſt the manufacturer of Berlin more than they do the manufacturer of Lyons. They both procure them from the ſame countries, and the former does not pay the ſix per cent entrance duty, to which the Lyons manufacturer is ſubject; beſide that the German workman will labour with more diligence than the French; nor is labour much dearer here than at Lyons. The one receives eight-pence an ell for making, and the other eight-pence three farthings for the ſame quantity, of equal fineneſs, which ſcarcely amounts to one and a half per cent on the price of the ſilk, eſtimated at five livres (four ſhillings and two-pence) the French ell. The Berlin manufacturer has likewiſe, by a multitude of local calculations of trade, to which I have paid ſevere attention, an advantage of thirty per cent over the Lyons trader, at the fair of Frankfort on the Oder. And, whether it proceed from a defect in the government, the poverty of the workmen, or the ignorance of the manufacturer, he ſtill cannot ſupport the competition.

petition. Of what uſe therefore are ſo many ruinous looms, of which there are not leſs than ſixteen hundred and fifty, at Berlin, Potſdam, Frankfort, and Koepnic? The product of which however is far from being equivalent to the ſame number of looms at Lyons. The Berlin weaver will not, at the utmoſt, do more than two-thirds of the work turned out of hand by the weaver of Lyons. Of theſe ſixteen hundred and fifty looms, we may reckon about twelve hundred in which are weaved taffetas, brocades, velvets, &c. The remainder are employed in fabricating gauze, about nine hundred and eighty thouſand Berlin ells of which are annually produced. (The French ell is equal to an ell three quarters of Berlin meaſure.) The twelve hundred ſilk-looms only produce about nine hundred and ſixty thouſand ells; which in the whole amount to one million nine hundred and forty thouſand ells. The ſum total of the looms conſume about one hundred and fourteen thouſand pounds weight of raw ſilk, at ſixteen ounces to the pound. (You know that ſeventy-ſix thouſand pounds weight of wrought ſilk will require about one hundred and fourteen thouſand pounds weight of undreſſed ſilk.) There are alſo twenty-eight thouſand pair, per annum, of ſilk ſtockings fabricated at Berlin; which conſume about five thouſand pounds weight of raw ſilk. It is principally in the ſtocking manufactory that the ſilk of the country is employed; which in reality is ſuperior in quality to that of the Levant; but they ſo ill underſtand the art of ſpinning it, in the Pruſſian ſtates, that it is with difficulty worked in the ſilk-loom. The ſtocking manufacturers uſe it to a greater advantage, becauſe, being cheap, and of a ſtrong quality, ſtockings are made from it preferable to thoſe of Niſmes and Lyons, in which cities the rejected ſilk alone is ſet apart for ſtockings. From eight to twelve thouſand pounds weight of ſilk is annually obtained in the Pruſſian ſtates, in which there are mulberry trees enough to ſupply thirty thouſand pounds weight. This conſtitutes no very formidable rivalſhip with the ſilk produced in the ſtates of the King of Sardinia.

The commiſſion of enquiry has written to inform Launay that it has no farther demand to make from him; and in conſequence he has addreſſed the King for permiſſion to depart.—The King replied—" I have told you to wait here till " the commiſſion ſhall be cloſed."—There is either cunning or tyranny on one ſide or the other.

LETTER LVIII.

December 23d, 1786.

MADEMOISELLE HENCKE, or Madam Rietz, as you think proper to call her, has petitioned the King to be pleaſed to let her know what ſhe is to expect, and to give her an eſtate on which ſhe may retire. The Sovereign offered her a country houſe, at the diſtance of ſome leagues from Potſdam. The lady ſent a poſitive refuſal, and the King, in return, will not hear any mention made of an eſtate. It is difficult to ſay what ſhall be the product of this conflict between cupidity and avarice. The paſtoral, in the mean time, proceeds without relaxation. Ines de Caſtro has ſeveral times been performed at the German theatre, imitated from the Engliſh and not from the French. In the fourth act, the Prince repeats with ardour every oath of fidelity to a lady of honour. This has been the moment of each repreſentation which the Queen has choſen to leave the houſe. Was it the effect of chance, or was it intendedly marked? This is a queſtion that cannot be anſwered, from any conſideration of the turbulent and verſatile, but not very feeble, character of this Princeſs.

When her brother-in-law, the Duke of Weimar, arrived, the King gave him a very gracious reception; and by degrees his countenance changed to icy coldneſs. Conjectures are that he has been lukewarm, or has wanted addreſs in his negociation with the Queen, on the ſubject of the marriage, which is far from being determined on. Two private houſes have been bought at Potſdam, and have been furniſhed with every degree of magnificence. And to what purpoſe, if marriage be intended? May not the wife be lodged in the palace? Speaking of arrangements, let me inform you that the King has ſent a Mr. Paris, his valet de chambre, into France, to pay his perſonal debts there, and to purchaſe ſuch things as are wanting to theſe newly-bought houſes which are conſecrated to love.

The relations of Mademoiſelle Voſs, who four months ſince preſſed her to depart for Sileſia, there to marry a gentleman who aſked her hand, are at preſent the firſt to declare that the projected royal marriage would be ridiculous, and even abſurd. In fact, its conſequences might be very dangerous; for, ſhould diſguſt ſucceed enjoyment, a thing which has been ſeen to happen, Mademoiſelle Voſs muſt ſeparate with a penſion; inſtead of which, in her rank of favourite, ſhe might rapidly make her own fortune, that of her family, and procure the advancement of her creatures.

Be this as it may, the time is paſſed at Potſdam in projecting bowers for love; and, though the Sovereign might not perhaps be exactly addreſſed in the words of *La Hire* to Charles VII.—"I aſſure "you, Sire, it is impoſſible to loſe a king"dom with greater gaiety;"—it may at leaſt be ſaid,—"It is impoſſible to riſk a "kingdom more tenderly."—But, whatever tranquillity may be affected, there are proceedings and projects which, without alarming, for he certainly has valour, occupy the Monarch. The journey of the Emperor to Cherſon, the very abrupt and very formal declaration of Ruſſia to the city of Dantzic, the intended camp of eighty thouſand men in Bohemia, for the amuſement of the King of Naples, are at leaſt incidents that may compel attention, if not remark. There are doubts concerning the journey of the Empreſs into the Crimea, Potemkim being unwilling to make her a witneſs of the incredible poverty of the people and the army, in this newly acquired garden.

The diſcouragement of the miniſtry of Berlin ſtill continues to increaſe. The King, for theſe two months, has not acted in concert with any ſingle miniſter. Hence their torpor and puſillanimity are augmented. Count Hertzberg is progreſſive in his deſcent, and Werder begins to decline. The King remains totally unconcerned; and never was the mania of reigning in perſon and of doing

ing nothing carried to greater exceſs. Inſtead of the capitation, a tax on houſes is talked of, as a ſubſtitute. I begin to think that neither of theſe taxes will take place. There is an inclination to retract without diſgrace, if that be poſſible; and the pretext will be furniſhed by the advice of the provincial preſidents. It is the more extraordinary that this capitation tax ſhould be ſo much perſiſted in, ſince, under the reign of Frederic William I. a ſimilar attempt was made, and which on the ſecond year was obliged to be renounced.

The Pruſſian army has made a new acquiſition, of the ſame kind with thoſe by which it has been enriched for theſe four months paſt. I ſpeak of Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg. He began his career by an exceſs of libertinage. He ſince has diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the trade of *corporal-ſchlag* (*q*); and by ſtretching the ſeverity of diſcipline to ferocity. He notwithſtanding has not acquired any great

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(*q*) The flogging-corporal: from *ſchlagen*; to ſtrike or whip. T.

reputation by theſe means. He has lived at Paris, and plunged into all the follies of Meſmeriſm. (r) He afterward profeſſed to be a ſomnambuliſt, and next continued the farce by the practice of midwifery. Theſe different maſquerades accompanied and concealed the real object of his ambition and his fervor, which is to give credit to the ſect of the myſtics, of whom he is one of the moſt enthuſiaſtic chiefs. A regiment has lately been granted him, which brings him to Berlin. His fortune will not permit him to live wholly there; but his ſituation will allow him to make journeys to that city, where he will be uſeful to the fathers of the new church. Singular, ardent, and active, he delivers himſelf like an oracle, and enſlaves his hearers by his powerful and ecſtatic elocution; with his eyes ſometimes haggard, always inflamed, and his countenance in exceſſive emotion.

(r) Meſmer was the quack-father of the modern magnetiſts; with whom, by the kind intervention of Mainaduc, we are now become ſomewhat acquainted. T.

In a word, he is one of thoſe men whom hypocrites and jugglers make their ſucceſsful precurſors.

23d, at Noon.

I have juſt had a very deep and almoſt ſentimental converſation with Prince Henry. *

He is in a ſtate of utter diſcouragement, as well on his own behalf as on behalf of his country. He has confirmed all I have related to you, and all I ſhall now relate.—Torpor in every operation, gloom at court, ſtupefaction among miniſters, diſcontent every where.—Little is projected, leſs ſtill is executed. When it is noticed that buſineſs is ſuffered to languiſh, the King's being in love is very gravely given as the reaſon; and it is affirmed that the vigour of adminiſtration depends on the compliance of Mademoiſelle Voſs. Remarks at the ſame time are made how ridiculous it is thus to ſuſpend the affairs of a whole kingdom, &c. &c.

The general directory, which ſhould be a council of ſtate, is nothing more than an office to expedite common occurrences. If miniſters make any propoſition no anſwer is returned; if they remonſtrate they meet with diſguſt. What they ought to do is ſo far from what they actually do, that the debaſement of their dignity occaſions very diſagreeable reflections. Never was a public opinion produced more ſuddenly than it has been by Frederic William II. in a country where the ſeeds of ſuch opinion did not appear to exiſt.

Prince Henry can find no remedy for domeſtic vices, but he has no apprehenſions concerning foreign affairs; becauſe that the King is at preſent wholly decided in favour of France, and ſtill more deſtitute of confidence for the favourers of the Engliſh faction.—Pray take notice that this is the verſion of the Prince; not that I am very incapable of believing it, if we do not throw up our own chances.

What the public papers have announced, reſpecting the journey of Prince

Henry, is without foundation. Some wiſh to go to Spa and France, but no plan is yet determined on; a vague hope, which he cannot ſuffer to expire, notwithſtanding the blows he receives, will detain him at Rheinſberg. Year will ſucceed to year; the moment of reſt will arrive, and habit will enchain him in his froſty caſtle, which he has lately enlarged and rendered more commodious. To theſe different motives, add a nullity of character, a will unſtable as the clouds, frequent indiſpoſition, and a heated imagination, by which he is exhauſted. That which we deſire without ſucceſs, gives more torment than that which is executed with difficulty.

A ſecond miniſter is to be appointed for Sileſia; one ſingly is a kind of Viceroy. It is dangerous, ſay they, to ſee with the eyes of an individual only. *Divide et impera.* Thus far have they advanced in their politics.

Prince Frederic of Brunſwic is ardently active in his intrigues againſt Prince Henry, and the Duke his brother. What he wiſhes is not known; but he wiſhes, and hence he has acquired a certain importance among the tumultuous crowd, who cannot perceive that a contemptible prince is ſtill more contemptible than an ordinary man. He neither can be of any durable utility, nor in the leaſt degree agreeable or eſtimable; but, under certain given circumſtances, he may be a very neceſſary ſpy.

LETTER LIX.

December 26*th*, 1786.

A Grand liſt of promotions is ſpoken of, in which Prince Henry and the Duke of Brunſwic are included, as field-marſhals. But the firſt ſays he will not be a field-marſhal. He continually oppoſed that title being beſtowed on the Duke, under Frederic II. who refuſed to confer ſuch a rank on the princes of the blood. This alternative of haughtineſs and vanity, even aided by his ridiculous comedy, will not lead him far. He intends to depart in the month of September for Spa; he is afterward to viſit our ſouthern provinces; and from thence is to continue his journey to Paris, where he is to paſs the winter. Such are his preſent projects, and the probability is ſufficiently great that not any thing of all this will happen.

The King has declared that he will not beſtow any places on perſons who are already in office under the Princes. This may perhaps be the cauſe that Count Noſtitz has forſaken Prince Henry. The Count is a very ſtrange kind of being.

Firſt ſent into Sweden, where he erected himſelf a chief of ſome envoys of the ſecond order, finding himſelf diſſatisfied with the ſevere laws of etiquette, he paſſed a ſlovenly life in an office which he exerciſed without abilities. On his return, he procured himſelf the appointment of one of the gentlemen who accompanied the Prince Royal into Ruſſia, but the conſent of the Prince he had forgotten to aſk. He was conſequently regarded as an inconvenient inſpector, and was but ſparingly produced on public occaſions. Hence aroſe ill-humour, complaints, and murmurs. The late King ſent him into Spain, where he diſſipated the remainder of his fortune. The merchants of Embden, and of Königſberg, requeſted the Spaniards would lower the duties on I know not what ſpecies of merchandize. Count Noſtitz ſolicited, negociated, and preſently wrote word—"That the new regulations were wholly "to the advantage of the Pruſſian ſub-"jects." The King ordered the court of Spain to be thanked. Fortunately Count Finckenſtein, who had not received the regulations, delayed ſending the thanks. The regulations came, and the Pruſſian merchants were found to be more burthened than formerly. His Majeſty was in a rage. Noſtitz was ſuddenly recalled, and arrived at Berlin without the fortune that he had ſpent, deſtitute of the reſpect that he had loſt, and deprived of all future hopes. Prince Henry welcomed him to his palace, an aſylum open to all malecontents. Here he remained eighteen months, and here diſplayed himſelf in the ſame manner that he had done every where elſe: inconſiſtent in his imaginations, immoral in mind, ungracious in manners, not capable of writing, not willing to read, as vain as a blockhead, as hot as a turkey-cock, and unfit for any kind of office, becauſe he neither poſſeſſes principles, seductive manners, nor knowledge. Such as here depicted, this inſipid mortal, the true hero of the Dunciad, is in a few days to be appointed envoy to the electorate of Hanover. In excuſe for ſo capricious a choice, it is alleged that he will have nothing to do in the place. But wherefore ſend a man to a place where he has nothing to do?

Madam Rietz, who of all the miſtreſſes of the Sovereign has moſt effectually reſiſted the inconſtancy of men, and the intrigues of the wardrobe (*s*), has modeſtly demanded the margraviate of Schwedt from the King, to ſerve as a place of retreat; and four gentlemen to travel with her ſon as with the ſon of a monarch. This audacious requeſt has not diſpleaſed the King, who had been offended by the demand made of an eſtate. He no doubt has diſcovered that

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(*s*) *La garde-robe.* " An ounce of civet, good apothe-" cary." T.

he is highly reſpected, now that he receives propoſitions ſo honourable.

His former friends no longer can obtain a minute's audience; the gates to them are gates of braſs. But a comedian, whoſe name is Marron, at preſent an inn-keeper at Verviers, lately came to ſolicit his protection. He choſe the moment when the King was ſtepping into his carriage. The King ſaid to him—"By "and by; by and by."—Marron waited; the King returned, ſent for him into his apartments, ſpoke with him a quarter of an hour, received his requeſt, and promiſed every thing for which he petitioned.—Never, no, never will ſubaltern influence decline; footmen will be all-puiſſant. Welner has publicly obtained the ſurname of *viceroy*, or of *petty king*.

The Monarch has written to the general of the gendarmes (Pritwitz) noticing that ſeveral of his officers played at games of chance; that theſe games were forbidden; that he ſhould renew the prohibitions under pain of being ſent to the fortreſs for the firſt offence, and of being broken for the ſecond. The information and the threat were meant at the General himſelf, who has loſt much money with the Duke of Mecklenburg.

It is affirmed that the Duke of Brunſwic will be here from the eighth to the fifteenth of January. But Archimedes himſelf demanded a point of ſupport, and I ſee none of any kind at Berlin. There are numerous wiſhes, but not one will; and the wiſhes themſelves are incoherent, contradictory, and raſh; he does not know nor will he ever know how to connect a ſingle link in the chain; he will more eſpecially never know how to lop off the paraſitical and avaricious ſucker. Agriculture is what is moſt neceſſary to be encouraged, particularly as ſoon as commercial oppreſſion ſhall be renounced; though this oppreſſion has hitherto been productive of gold, thanks to the ſituation of the Pruſſian ſtates. But how may agriculture be encouraged in a country where the half of the peaſants are a-

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tached to the glebe? For ſo they are in Pomerania, Pruſſia, and in other parts.

It would be a grand operation in the royal domains, were they divided into ſmall farms, as has ſo long ſince been done by the great landholders in England. It is a ſubject of much greater importance than regulations of trade; but there are ſo many intereſted people to be controverted, and the habit of ſervitude is ſo rooted, that ſtrength of underſtanding, energy and conſiſtency, not one grain of which I can find here, are neceſſary to make the attempt. More knowledge likewiſe is requiſite than will here be found, for a long time to come, for it to be ſuppoſed that there is no town, no province, which would not moſt gladly conſent to pay the King much more than the neat revenue he at preſent obtains, if he would ſuffer the inhabitants to aſſeſs themſelves; taking care however continually to watch over the aſſeſſments, that the magiſtrates and the nobles might not oppreſs the people; or for it to be imagined that the ſubject would not gain three fourths of the expences of collecting, and would be free of all thoſe unworthy reſtraints which are at preſent impoſed upon them, by the fiſcal treaſury.

It is alſo neceſſary to recollect that it is not here as with us, where the body, the maſs, of national wealth is ſo great, becauſe of the excellence of the ſoil and the climate, the correſpondence between the provinces, &c. &c. that we may cut as cloſe as we will, provided we do not erect kilns to burn up the graſs; and that in France the expences of collecting only need be diminiſhed; that no other relief is neceſſary; nay, that we may ſtill prodigiouſly increaſe the load, provided that load be well poiſed.—Here, two or three provinces at the utmoſt excepted, the baſis is ſo narrow and the ſoil ſo little fruitful, ſo damp, ſo impoveriſhed, that it is only for tutelary authority to perform the greateſt part of all which can reconcile nature to this her neglected offſpring. The diviſion of the domain itſelf, an operation ſo productive of every kind of reſource, requires very powerful advances; for the farmer's ſtock and the implements of huſbandry are, perhaps, thoſe which, when wanting, the arm can leaſt ſupply.

Independent of this grand point of view, we muſt not forget THE MILITARY POWER, which muſt here be reſpected, for here there are neither Alps nor Apennines, rivers nor ſeas for ramparts; here therefore, with ſix millions of inhabitants, government is deſirous, and to a certain point is obliged, to maintain two hundred thouſand men in arms. In war, there are no other means than thoſe of courage or of obedience, and obedience is an innate idea in the *ſerf* peaſant; for which reaſon perhaps the grand force of the Pruſſian army conſiſts in the union of the feudal and military ſyſtem. Excluſive of that vaſt conſideration, which I ſhall elſewhere develope, let me add it will not be ſufficient here to act like ſuch or ſuch a Ruſſian or Poliſh lord, and ſay—"You are enfranchiſed"—For the ſerfs here will reply—"We are very

"much

"much obliged to you for your enfranchiſement, but we do not chooſe to be free."—Or even to beſtow lands gratuitouſly on them, for they will anſwer—"What would you have us do with lands (*t*)?"—Proprietors and property can only be erected by making advances;

(*t*) It is a melancholy truth that ſuch is, and indeed ſuch muſt neceſſarily be, the ſpirit of ſerf peaſants; nay, in Ruſſia this error is more rooted than in Pruſſia. The peaſants have no examples of the poſſibility of exiſting in a ſtate of independence: they think themſelves certain of an aſylum againſt hunger, and old age, in the domains of their tyrants, and, if enfranchiſed, would imagine themſelves abandoned to an inhoſpitable world (which indeed locally ſpeaking they would be), in which they muſt be expoſed to periſh with cold and hunger. Men in a body muſt be led to act from motives of intereſt, which when well underſtood are the beſt of motives. Nothing would be more eaſy than to convince the peaſantry of the largeſt empire, in a few years, of what their true intereſt and the true intereſt of all parties is, were not the majority of men, unfortunately, incapable of looking far beyond the trifling wants, and the paltry paſſions, of the moment. It is a melancholy conſideration that ſo many ages muſt yet revolve before truths ſo ſimple ſhall be univerſally known; even now that the divine art of printing is diſcovered. T.

and advances are expenſive; and, as there are ſo few governments which have the wiſdom to ſow in order that they may reap, this will not be the firſt to begin. It is little probable that the morning of wholeſome politics ſhould firſt break upon this country.

At preſent it is almoſt publicly known that the Count d'Eſt * * is to depart in the month of April for France. I ſhall ſubmit it to your delicacy, and to your juſtice, to pronounce whether I can remain here the overſeer of a *chargé d'affaires.* During his abſence, functions might be beſtowed on me: here I certainly would not remain under an envoy *per interim*; nor would this require more than the ſimple precaution of ſending me ſecret credentials. But, as no ſuch thing will be done, you will perceive that this is a new and very ſtrong reaſon for my departure, about that time. Thoſe who would make me nothing more than a gazetteer are ill acquainted with mankind, and ſtill more ſo thoſe who hope to oblige me to conſent tacitly or perforce.

PS. The Count de Maſanne, a fervent myſtic, is the grand maſter of the Queen's houſehold. Welner ſupped with her yeſterday, and had the place of honour; that is to ſay, he ſat oppoſite her. If he cede to wiſhes of ſuch indecent vanity, he will preſently be undone.

LETTER LX.

December 30th, 1786.

YESTERDAY was a memorable moment for the man of obſervation. Count Bruhl, a catholic, a foreigner, aſſuming his rank in the Pruſſian army, was inſtalled in his place of governor, and the capitation tax was intimated. This capitation, ſo openly contemned, ſupported with ſo much obſtinacy, demonſtrated to be vicious in its principle, impoſſible of execution, and barren in product, at once announces the diſgraceful inanity of the general directory, by which it was loudly oppoſed, and the ſovereign influence of the ſubaltern by whom its chiefs have been reſiſted. How can we ſuppoſe the King has been deceived reſpecting the public opinion of an operation ſo univerſally condemned? How may he be excuſed, ſince his miniſters themſelves have informed him that he was in danger of perhaps for ever caſting from him, at the very commencement of his reign, the title of well-beloved, of which he was ſo ambitious? Here we at leaſt behold the ambiguous morning of a cloudy reign.

The Queen is not ſatisfied with the choice that has been made of Count Bruhl, neither is ſhe with the regulations of her houſehold, and therefore ſhe is again contracting debts. She is only allowed, for expences of every kind, fifty-one thouſand crowns per annum. It will be difficult for her to make this ſum ſupply her real wants, her generous propenſities, and her numerous caprices. Blind to the amours of the King, ſhe can ſee the diſorder of his domeſtic affairs. The day before yeſterday there was no wood for the fires of her apartments. Her houſe ſteward intreated the ſteward of the royal palace to lend him his aſſiſtance. The latter excuſed himſelf, becauſe of the ſmallneſs of his remaining ſtock. How, you will aſk, can diſorder ſo indecent happen? Becauſe the quantity conſumed was regulated by the late King, on the ſuppoſition that the Queen and her children reſided at Potſdam. Since his death no perſon has thought of the neceſſary addition. Such incidents, trifling as they are in themſelves, prove to what exceſs careleſſneſs, and the defects of inconſiſtency are carried.

Count Bruhl was waited for in order to furniſh the houſe of the princes. As he is overwhelmed by debts, and as a Saxon nóbleman ruined, it was requiſite the King ſhould cauſe the ſum of twenty thouſand crowns to be paid at Dreſden, to ſatisfy the moſt impatient of his creditors. Opinions concerning him are divided. The only points on which people are unanimous are, that he is one of the flock of the elect (the myſtics), and that he plays exceedingly well on the violin. Thoſe who have been acquainted with him fifteen years ago ſpeak in raptures of his amenity. Thoſe whoſe knowledge of him is more recent are ſilent.

Thoſe who are totally unacquainted with him ſay, he is the moſt amiable of men. His pupil ſmiles when he is praiſed.— It is affirmed that the Grand Duke has ſent him here, and that it is his intention to take him to himſelf, whenever he ſhall have the power.

The Prince Royal will ſoon be worthy the trouble of obſervation; not merely becauſe Frederic II. drew his horoſcope in the following terms,—“ I ſhall reign “ again in him,”—for perhaps he only meant by that to teſtify his contempt for the preſent King; but becauſe all things in him proclaim greatneſs, but ungracioufneſs of character; awkwardneſs, but a ſpeaking countenance; unpoliſhed, but ſincere. He aſks the wherefore of every thing, nor will he ever be ſatisfied with a reply that is not reaſonable. He is ſevere and tenacious, even to ferocity; and yet is not incapable of affection and ſenſibility. He already knows how to eſteem and contemn. His diſdain of his father approaches hatred, which he is not very careful to conceal. His veneration of the late King partakes of idolatry, and this he proclaims. Perhaps the youth is deſtined to great actions; and, ſhould he become the engine of ſome memorable revolution, men who can ſee to a diſtance will not be ſurpriſed.

Launay at length departs; and, as I believe, ſolely from the fear which the miniſtry, or rather which Welner, has that the King ſhould in ſome weary or embarraſſed moment reſtore him to his place. His diſmiſſion has been granted him only on condition that he would give up twenty-five thouſand crowns of arrears, which are his due. This is a ſhameful piece of knavery. They have exacted an oath from him that he will not carry off any papers that relate to the ſtate. This is pitiable weakneſs. For of what validity is ſuch an oath? He may afford you ſome uſeful, or rather curious, annotations. In other reſpects, the man is nothing, leſs than nothing. He does not ſo much as ſuſpect the elements of his own trade. His ſpeech is perplexed, his ideas are confuſed;

in a word, he could only act a great part in a country where he had neither judges nor rivals. But he is not, as he is accuſed of being, a malicious perſon. He is a very weak and a very vain man, and nothing more. He has acted the part of an executioner, no doubt; but where is the financier who has not? Where would be the juſtice of demanding the hangman to be racked becauſe of the tortures he had inflicted, in purſuance of the ſentence which the judge had pronounced?

He will predict deficiencies in the revenue, and in this he will not be wrong; but he perhaps will not inform you, although it is exceedingly true, that œconomical principles, which are the guardians of this country, are already very ſenſibly on the decline. The ſervice is more expenſive, the houſes of princes more numerous, the ſtables are better filled, penſions are multiplied, arrangements more coſtly, ſalaries of ambaſſadors almoſt doubled, the manners more elegant, &c. The greateſt part of theſe expences were neceſſary. The real miſfortune is that there is no care taken for the proportionate increaſe of the revenue, by ſlow, but certainly productive, means; and that they ſeem not to ſuppoſe there will be any deficiency, which will at length make an immenſe error in the ſum total; ſo that, without war, a long reign may ſee the end of the treaſury, ſhould the preſent meaſures be purſued. It is not the prodigality of pomp which excites murmurs. It is a prodigality in contraſt to the perſonal avarice of the King which is to be dreaded. It is an inſenſible but a continual waſting. Hitherto the evil is inconſiderable, and no doubt does not ſtrike any perſon; but I begin to underſtand the country in the whole, and I perceive theſe things more diſtinctly than I can deſcribe.

It was a cuſtom with the late King, every year, on the twenty-fourth of December, to make preſents to his brothers and ſiſters, the whole ſum of which amounted to about twenty thouſand crowns. This cuſtom the nephew has ſuppreſſed. A habitude of forty years had led the uncles to conſider theſe gratuities as a part of their income; nor did they expect that they ſhould have *ſet* the firſt examples, or rather have *been made* the firſt examples of œconomy. Faithful to his peculiar mode of making preſents, the King has gratified the Duke of Courland with a yellow ribband. It would be difficult more unworthily to proſtitute his order.

To this ſordidneſs of metal, and this debauchery of moral, coin, examples of eaſy prodigality may be oppoſed. The houſe of the Jew Ephraim had paid two hundred thouſand crowns, on account, for the late King, at Conſtantinople, during the ſeven years war. The money was intended to corrupt ſome Turks, but the project failed. Frederic II. continually delayed the repayment of the ſum. His ſucceſſor yeſterday reimburſed the heirs of Ephraim (*u*).

A ſadler

(*u*) It is curious to read, in the Hiſtory of the Seven Years War, (chap. ix.) the account which this conſci-

A ſadler who had thirty years been the creditor of the late King, who never would pay the debts he had contracted while Prince Royal, demanded the ſum of three thouſand crowns from his preſent Majeſty. The King wrote at the bottom of the petition—"Pay the bill "at ſight, with intereſt at ſix per cent."

The Duke of Holſteinbeck is at length to go to Königſberg, to take command of a battalion of grenadiers. I have elſewhere depicted this inſignificant Prince, who will be a boy at ſixty, and who will neither do harm to the enemies of the ſtate nor good to his private friends.

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conſcientious King gives of the *corruption* he attempted and the profuſion with which he ſcattered the money of the uncircumciſed Jew; but whom he takes good care never to mention. It was the treaſure of *the ſtate*, and the ſtate, with all its goods and chattels, flocks and herds, biped and quadruped, ſerfs and Jews included, were his—For "was he not every inch a king?" T.

LETTER LXI.

January 1ſt, 1787.

THE King has lately beſtowed his order on four of his ſubjects. The one is the keeper of his treaſury (M. von Blumenthal), a faithful but a dull miniſter. The ſecond is the maſter of his horſe (*v*), M. von Schwerin, a ſilly buffoon under the late King, a cypher during his whole life, a perplexed blockhead, and on whom the firſt experiment that was made, after the acceſſion, was to deprive him of his place. The third is his Majeſty's governor, a man of eighty, who has been kept at a diſtance for theſe eighteen years paſt, and who is deſtitute of talents, ſervice, dignity, and eſteem for his pupil, which perhaps is the firſt mark of good ſenſe he ever betrayed. The laſt, who is not yet named, is Count Bruhl, who is thus rewarded by titles, after receiving the moſt effective gratifications before he has exercifed

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(*v*) *Grand ecuyer.*

erciſed any office. What a proſtitution of honours! I ſay what a proſtitution; for the prodigality with which they are beſtowed is itſelf proſtitution.

Among others, who have received favours, a myſtic prieſt is diſtinguiſhed; a preacher of effrontery, who repoſes on the couch of gratifications, at the expence of two thouſand crowns. To him add Baron Boden, driven from Heſſe Caſſel, a ſpy of the police at Paris, known at Berlin to be a thief, a pickpocket, a forger, capable of every thing except that which is honeſt, and of whom the King himſelf ſaid he is a raſcal, yet on whom he has beſtowed a chamberlain's key. Penſions innumerable have been granted to obſcure or infamous courtiers. The academicians Welner and Moulinès are appointed directors of the finances of the academy.

All theſe favours announce a Prince without judgment, without delicacy, without eſteem either for himſelf or his favours; reckleſs of his own fame, or of the opinion of the public; and as proper to diſcourage thoſe who poſſeſs ſome capacity as to embolden ſuch as are natively nothing, or worſe than nothing.

The contempt of the people is the merited ſalary of ſo many good works; and this contempt is daily more pointed: the ſtupor by which it was preceded is now no more. The world was at firſt aſtoniſhed to ſee the King faithful to his comedy, faithful to his concert, faithful to his old miſtreſs, faithful to his new one, finding time to examine engravings, furniture, the ſhops of tradeſmen, to play on the violoncello, to enquire into the tricks of the ladies of the palace, and ſeeking for moments to attend to miniſters, who debate in his hearing on the intereſts of the ſtate. But at preſent aſtoniſhment is incited if ſome new folly or ſome habitual ſin has not conſumed one of his days.

The new uniforms, invented by his Majeſty, have this day made their appearance. This military bauble, prepared for the day on which men have the ridiculous cuſtom of making a ſhew of themſelves, confirms the opinion that the Sovereign who annexes ſo much importance to ſuch a circumſtance, poſſeſſes that kind of underſtanding which induces him to believe that parading is a thing of conſequence.

Is his heart better than his underſtanding? Of this men begin to doubt.

Count Alexander Wartenſleben, a former favourite of the preſent King, who was impriſoned at Spandau for his fidelity to him, being ſent for from the farther part of Pruſſia to Berlin, to command the guards, has lately been placed at the head of a Brandenburg regiment; and by this arrangement he loſes a penſion of a hundred guineas, which was granted him by the King while Prince Royal. This frank and honeſt officer is a ſtranger to the ſect in favour; and, after having languiſhed in a kind of forgetfulneſs, finally receives a treatment which neither can be called diſgrace nor reward. This is generally conſidered as a deplorable proof that the King, to ſay the leaſt, neither knows how to love nor hate.

Mademoiſelle Voſs has been perſuaded that it would be more generous, in her, to prevent her lover committing a folly than to profit by ſuch folly; for thus is the marriage publicly called, which would have become a ſubject of eternal reproach, whenever the intoxication of paſſion ſhould have ſlumbered. The beauty therefore will be made a Counteſs, become rich, and perhaps the ſovereign of the will of the Sovereign, but not his ſpouſe. Her influence may be productive of great changes, and in other countries might render Count Schulemburg, the ſon-in-law of Count Finckenſtein, firſt miniſter. He has acted very wiſely in attaching Struenſee to himſelf, who teaches him his trade with ſo much perſpicuity that the Count imagines his trade is learned. He has beſide an exerciſed underſtanding, and an aptitude to induſtry, order, conſiſtency and energy. Aided by his tutor, he will find no difficulties too great; and he is the man neceſſary for this King, whoſe will is feeble and cowardly. The late King was equally averſe to men of many difficulties, but it was from a conviction of his own ſuperiority. Great talents however are little neceſſary to reign over your men of Topinamboo.

The memorial againſt the capitation tax, which has been ſigned by Meſſrs. Hertſberg, Heinitz, Arnim, and Schulemburg, concludes with theſe words:—"This operation, which alarms all claſſes "of your Majeſty's ſubjects, effaces in "their hearts the epithet of *well beloved*, "and freezes the fortitude of thoſe whom "you have appointed to your council." Struenſee on his part has ſent in two pages of figures, which demonſtrate the miſcalculations that will infallibly be diſcovered when the tax has been collected. Meſſrs. Werder, Gaudi, and probably Welner, perſiſt; and the King, who neither has the power to reſiſt a plurality of voices nor that of receding, dares not yet decide.

On the fifteenth of February, he is to depart for Potſdam, where he propoſes to continue the remainder of the year;

that period excepted when he journeys into Sileſia and Pruſſia.

PS. *Evening.* The King has to-day advanced the Duke of Brunſwic to the rank of field-marſhal. This is indubitably the firſt honourable choice he has made; and every body approves his having ſingly promoted this prince.

January 2d.

The Dutch Envoy has thrown me into a ſtate of great embarraſſment, and into aſtoniſhment not leſs great. He has aſked me, in explicit terms, whether I conſented that endeavours ſhould be made to procure me credentials to treat with the Princeſs of Orange, at Nimeguen. If deception might be productive of any thing, I ſhould have imagined he only wiſhed to induce me to ſpeak; but the queſtion was accompanied with ſo many circumſtances, all true and ſincere ſo many confidential communications of every kind, and a ſeries of anecdotes ſo rational, and ſo deciſive, that, though I might

I might find it difficult to account for the whim he had taken, I could not poſſibly doubt of the candour of the envoy. After this firſt conſideration, I heſitated whether I ſhould mention the affair to you, from a fear that the preſumption ſhould be imputed to me of endeavouring to rival M. de Renneval; but, beſide that my cypher will paſs under the inſpection of my prudent friend, before it will fall into the hands of the King or his miniſters, and that I ſhall thus be certain he will eraſe whatever might injure me to no purpoſe, I have imagined it was not a part of my duty to paſs over a propoſition of ſo ſingular a kind in ſilence. I ought to add farther, referring to the ample details which I ſhall give, after the long conference which I am to have with him to-morrow morning, that, if France has no latent intention, and means only to weaken the Stadtholder, in ſuch a manner as that his influence cannot hereafter be of ſervice to the Engliſh, the patriots are by no means ſo ſimple in their intentions. I have proofs that, from the year 1784, to the end of 1785, they were in ſecret correſpondence with Baron Reede; and that they ceaſed preciſely at the moment when the Baron wrote to them—"Make your propoſals: "I have a *carte blanche* from the Princeſs, "and, on this condition, the King of "Pruſſia will anſwer for the Prince."—I have alſo proofs that M. de Renneval cannot ſucceed, and that the affair will never be brought to a concluſion, "ſo "long as negotiation ſhall be continued "inſtead of arbitration." Theſe are his words, and they appear to me remarkable. It is equally evident, that the implacable vengeance of the Duke de la Vauguyon ariſes from his having dared to make love to the Princeſs, and his love having been rejected.—I ſhall leave thoſe who are able to judge of the veracity of theſe allegations; but it is my duty to repeat verbally the following phraſe of Baron Reede.—"M. de Calonne is inimical to "us, and his enemy opens his arms to "receive us. What is it that M. de "Calonne wiſhes? Is it to be miniſter of

“ foreign affairs? A ſucceſsful pacifica-
“ tion of the troubles of Holland would
“ render him more ſervice, in ſuch caſe,
“ than the continuation of thoſe troubles,
“ which may kindle a general conflagration.
“ I demand a categorical anſwer
“ to the following queſtion: Should
“ it be proved to M. de Calonne that the
“ Stadtholder is in reality come over to
“ the ſide of France, or, which is the
“ ſame thing, if he ſhall be obliged to
“ come over, will he then be againſt us?
“ Has he any private intereſt which we
“ counteract? Is it impoſſible he ſhould
“ explain himſelf? The chances certainly
“ are all in his favour againſt M.
“ de Bre * * *, whom we have continually
“ hated and deſpiſed. Wherefore will
“ he ſpoil his own game?”

I neceſſarily anſwered theſe queſtions in terms rather vague. I informed him that M. de Calonne, in what related to foreign affairs, continually purſued the line marked out by M. de Vergennes; that the former, far from coveting the place of the latter, would ſupport him with all his power, if, which could not happen, he had need of his ſupport; that a comptroller-general never could be deſirous of any thing but peace and political tranquillity; that whether M. de Calonne had or had not particular agents in Holland, was a fact of which I was ignorant (this Baron Reede poſitively aſſured me was the caſe, and probably was the reaſon of his afterward conceiving the idea of making me their ſubſtitute); but that he would ſuppoſe me a madman, ſhould I ſpeak to him of ſuch a thing; and therefore if, as ſeemed very improbable, it were true that the Princeſs of Orange, on the recommendation of Baron Reede, ſhould be capable of placing any confidence in me, it was neceſſary ſhe ſhould give this to be underſtood, through ſome medium with which I ſhould be unacquainted; as for example by the way of Pruſſia; but it ſcarcely could be ſuppoſed that there would be any wiſh of ſubſtituting a perſon unknown, in that walk, to thoſe who were already in the higheſt repute.

Baron Reede perſiſted, and further added, not to mention that M. de Renneval could not long remain in his ſtation, the parties would undoubtedly come to a better underſtanding, when the Princeſs could ſpeak with confidence; that confidence was a ſenſation which could not be commanded, and which ſhe never could feel for this negotiator.—In fine he demanded, under the ſeal of profound ſecrecy, a conference with me, which I did not think it would be right to refuſe; and his whole converſation perfectly demonſtrated two things; the firſt that his party ſuppoſes M. de Calonne is totally their enemy, and that he is the miniſter of influence in this political conflict; and the ſecond, that they believed him to be deceived. I am the more perſuaded theſe ſuppoſitions are true becauſe he very ſtrongly inſiſted, even ſhould I not receive any orders to repair to Holland, I ſhould paſs through Nimeguen, on my return to Paris; that, by the aid of the pledges of confidence which I ſhould receive from him, I might ſufficiently penetrate the thoughts of the Princeſs, ſo as to be able to render M. de Calonne a true report of the ſituation of affairs, and what might be the baſis of a ſincere and ſtable conciliation. It is not therefore ſo much another perſon, inſtead of M. de Renneval, that they deſire as another Couette Toury, or ſome particular confident of M. de Calonne. I ſhall conclud with two remarks that are perhaps important.

I. My ſentiments and principles concerning liberty are ſo known that cannot be regarded as one of the Orang party. There is therefore a real deſir of accommodation at Nimeguen. An would not the ſucceſs of this accommodation be of greater conſequence t M. de Calonne than the machination of M. de Bre**? Wherefore will he no have the merit of the pacification, if i be neceſſary? And is it not, in a certai degree, neceſſary; in the preſent politi ſtate of Europe?

II. The province of Friſeland ha ever been of the Anti-Stadtholder party, and it now begins to be on better terms with the Prince. Is it not becauſe there has been the ill addreſs of attacking the Stadtholder in ſome part hoſtile to the provinces, and in which neither the nobility nor the regencies do or can wiſh to ſee the conſtitution abſolutely overthrown? Has not the province of Holland drawn others too far into its particular meaſures?

Theſe two conſiderations, which I can ſupport by a number of corroborating circumſtances, perhaps are worthy the trouble of being weighed. I ſhall ſend you, by the next courier, the reſult of our conference; but, if there are any orders, information, or directions, to be given me on the ſubject, it is neceſſary not to leave me in ſuſpence; for my ſituation relative to Reede is embarraſſing, ſince I dare neither repel nor invite advances, which moſt aſſuredly I never ſhall provoke, and which, by the well avowed ſtate of the cabinet of Potſdam, it was even impoſſible I ſhould provoke, had I been poſſeſſed of ſo much temerity.

N**

N * * has already written ſeveral letters to me from Courland, and mentions an important diſpatch in cypher, which is to be ſent by the next courier. But the evident reſult is that it is too late to ſave Courland; that every thing which ought to have been prevented is done, or as good as done; and that the beſt phyſicians would but loſe their time in preſcribing for the incurable. The bearer of the letter, which occaſioned the departure of N * *, is a merchant of Liebau, named Immermann. He has been charged with the negotiation of a loan in Holland, and elſewhere; but, as it is ſaid, has met with no ſucceſs. It is ſuppoſed in the country that the Duke has thrown impediments in its way. The diet of Courland is to ſit in January. It is worthy of remark that, for two years paſt, no delegate has been ſent from Courland to Warſaw.

Good information is ſaid to be received that four corps of Ruſſian troops have begun their march, purpoſely to approach the Crimea at the time that the Empreſs ſhall be there; and this not ſo much to inſpire the Turks with fear, as to remove the greateſt and moſt formidable part of the military from the vicinage of Peterſburg, and the northern provinces of Ruſſia; and eſpecially from the Grand Duke, that there may not be any poſſibility of dangerous or vexatious events; for the unbounded love of the Ruſſians for their Grand Duke is apprehended. Yet, if ſuch terrors are felt, wherefore undertake ſo uſeleſs a journey, which will coſt from ſeven to eight millions of rubles? So uſeleſs I ſay, according to your opinions, for, according to mine, the Empreſs believes ſhe is going to Conſtantinople, or ſhe does not intend to depart.

The troops are to be divided into four corps, of forty thouſand men each. The General of theſe armies will be the Field-marſhal Potemkim, who will have the immediate command of a corps of forty thouſand men, and the ſuperintendence of the others which are under him, to be led by Generals Elvut, Michaelſſohn,

and

and Soltikow. Prince Potemkim has under his particular and independent orders ſixty thouſand irregular troops in the Crimea. It is whiſpered he entertains the project of making himſelf King of the country, and of a good part of the Ukrain.

LETTER LXII.

January 4th, 1787.

MY conference with Baron Reede is over. It continued three hours and a half, and I have not the ſmalleſt remaining doubt concerning his intentions, after the confidence with which he ſpoke, and the writings he ſhewed me. He appears to be a good citizen, a conſtitutionaliſt by principle, a friend of liberty by inſtinct, loyal and true from character and habit, and rather the ſervant of the Princeſs of Orange from perſonal affection than from the place he holds under her huſband; a perſon deſirous of ending tumultuous and diſquieting debates, becauſe in pacification he contemplates the good of his country, and that of the Princeſs whoſe confidence he poſſeſſes. He is further a miniſter of paſſ-able talents, who has abſtained from making advances ſo long as he preſumed our political management of the court of Pruſſia would greatly influence its intervention, and that he might prevail on that court to ſpeak firmly. At preſent, feeling that the reſpect in which the cabinet of Berlin was held is on the decline, and eſpecially perceiving the King is diſintereſted in the affairs of the Stadtholder, becauſe he has no intereſt in any thing, he knocks immediately at the door of reconciliation.

You may hold the following as probabilities—

I. That the Princeſs, who will finally decide what the cataſtrophe is to be, at leaſt in a very great meaſure, is to a certain point deſirous of accommodation, and to throw herſelf into the arms of France, becauſe that, in fine, ſhe dreads riſking a ſtake too great, to the injury of her family.

II. That ſhe imagines M. de Calonne to be the miniſter who influences the mind of the King, and the perſonal enemy of her houſe.

III. That ſucceſsful attempts have been made to inſpire her with very ſtrong prejudices againſt his ſincerity.

IV. That ſtill ſhe ſeeks his friendſhip, and is deſirous of a correſpondence with him, either direct or indirect; and of an impartial truſty friend in Holland, who ſhould poſſeſs her confidence.

V. That not only nothing is more poſſible than to retouch the regulations, without ſome modifications in which the influence of the Stadtholder cannot be repreſſed, but that this is what they expect, ſecretly convinced of its juſtice, and politically of its neceſſity; and that Baron Reede, as a citizen, and one of the firſt of the firſt rank, would be much vexed were they not retouched.

The reaſon of the ſincere return of the Princeſs of Orange, who indeed was never entirely alienated, is that ſhe ſeriouſly deſpairs of being efficaciouſly ſerved at Berlin.

That of her opinion of the enmity of M. de Calonne is ſolely founded on his intimate connection with the Rhingrave of Salm, which the latter exaggerates; and the inconſiderate diſcourſe of M. de C * * * *, which really ſurpaſſes all imagination, and who is ſuppoſed to be the particular intimate of the miniſter.

Her prejudices againſt M. de Calonne ariſe, in a great part, from the calumny ſpread by one Vandermey, who had formed I know not what enterpriſe on Bergue-Saint-Vinox (while this miniſter was intendant of the province), in which he failed in ſuch a manner as to coſt the Stadtholder more than a hundred and ſixty thouſand florins; and, that he might excuſe himſelf, he threw the whole blame on the oppoſition made by M. de Calonne. Add further that all theſe cauſes of diſcontent, ſuſpicion, and animoſity, are ſtill kept in fermentation by a M. de P * * *, the creature of M. de B * * *, the which M. de P * * * equally blames M. de Veirac, M. de C * * * *, the Rhingrave of Salm,

M. de Renneval, the Count de Vergennes, and all that has been done, all that is done, and all that ſhall be done; but eſpecially M. de Calonne, whom he depicts as the incendiary of the Seven Provinces; which, with all Europe beſide, cannot be ſaved but by the meekneſs of M. de Br * *, the gentle, the poliſhed, the pacificator.

With reſpect to the deſire of the Princeſs to be on better terms with M. de Calonne, it is I think evident. Baron Reede is too circumſpect, and too artful, to have taken ſuch a ſtep with me, had he not been authorized. What follows will perhaps give you the genealogy of his ideas, which may ſufficiently explain the whole epiſode. He could eaſily know that I wrote in cypher. He is the intimate friend of Hertzberg. And for whom do I cypher? Whoever is acquainted with the coaſt, and the progreſs of our affairs, muſt know it can only be for M. de Calonne. On what principle do I act? The Duke of Brunſwic, who has had many conferences with him,

cannot

cannot have left him in ignorance that my views on this ſubject were all for peace. Having been totally diſappointed, through the ignorance of Count d'Eſt * *, which he affirms is complete in this reſpect, and which muſt therefore, on this ſubject, redouble the native ſurlineſs of the Count; and by the ſtupidity of F * * *, who painfully comes to ſtudy his leſſon with him, and returning does not always repeat it faithfully; well convinced that the influence of Count Hertzberg is null, the affection of the King cooled, and the credit of his cabinet trifling, the Baron has propoſed to the Princeſs to make this experiment.

With reſpect to her conſent, whether expreſs or tacit, and her ſerious determination to retouch the regulations, of this I have ſeen proofs in the letters of the Princeſs, and read them in the cypher of the Princeſs (for it will be well to know that ſhe is very laborious, cyphers and decyphers herſelf, and with her own hand indites anſwers to all the writings of the contrary party) as I have done in thoſe of Larrey and of Linden.

I did not think myſelf juſtified in diſregarding ſuch overtures. After having ſaid every thing poſſible in favour of M. de Calonne, his views, projects, and connections—(nor, I confeſs, do I believe that the manner in which I am devoted to him left me at this moment without addreſs)—after having treated as I ought the perfidious duplicity of M. de B * * *, and his agents, and after having uttered what I thought on the prudence of M. de Vergennes, the delicate probity of the King, and the undoubted politics of our cabinet, which certainly are to render the Stadtholder ſubſervient to the public good, and the independence of the United Provinces, but which cannot be to procure his expulſion, it was agreed that I ſhould write the day after to-morrow to demand a categorical anſwer from M. de Calonne, to know whether he wiſhes to begin a correſpondence, direct or indirect, with the Princeſs; and whether he conſents any propoſitions for accommodation ſhould be made him, for rendering which effectual his perſonal word ſhould be accepted, when they ſhall be agreed on, and to an honourable pacification in behalf of the Stadtholder, ſuitable to the Sovereign.

Baron Reede, on his part, who is cautious, and wiſhed to appear to act totally from himſelf, wrote to the Princeſs to inform her that this ſtep was taken at his inſtigation, and to demand her prompt and formal authority to act. We are to meet to-morrow on horſeback, in the park, that we may reciprocally ſhew each other our minutes; it being certainly well underſtood that neither of us is to ſhew the other more than the oſtenſible minutes we ſhall have prepared; and the whole is to depart on Saturday; becauſe, ſaid he, as not more than twelve or thirteen days were neceſſary for him to have an anſwer, this would be time enough, before yours ſhould arrive, for us to form the propoſed plan; at leaſt ſo far as to eſtabliſh confidence.

This is the faithful abſtract of our converſation. With reſpect to the propoſitions, I had only to liſten; and as to the reflections, I have only to apologize. Should you be tempted to ſuppoſe I have been too forward in accepting the propoſal to write, I beg the incident may be weighed, and that I may be informed how it may be poſſible, at the diſtance of ſix hundred leagues, ever to be ſucceſsful, if I am never to exceed my literal inſtructions. And after all, what new information have I given the Baron? Who here, who is concerned in diplomatic affairs, has any doubt that I cypher? And on what ſubjects do men cypher? Is it philoſophy, literature, or politics? Neither have I told of what kind my buſineſs is; and my conſtant *formulæ* have been—*I ſhall endeavour—I ſhall find ſome mode—I ſhall take an opportunity of letting M. de Calonne know, &c.*

At preſent, ſend me orders either to recede or to advance; and in the latter caſe give me inſtructions; for I have only hitherto been able to divine, and that the more vaguely becauſe, as you muſt eaſily feel, it was neceſſary I ſhould appear to the Baron to be better informed than I really am, and conſequently to aſk fewer queſtions than I ſhould otherwiſe have done. Aſk yourſelf what advantages might I not obtain, were I not obliged to have recourſe intirely to my own poor ſtock.

In brief, what pledges do you deſire of the ſincerity of the Princeſs? What proofs of friendſhip will you afford her? What precaution do you require for the good conduct of the Stadtholder? What kind of reſtraints do you mean to lay him under? Will you in nothing depart from what was ſtipulated in the commiſſion of the 27th of February, 1766? What are the modifications you propoſe? Muſt mediation be neceſſarily and formally accepted? Is it not previouſly requiſite that the provinces of Guelderland and Utrecht ſhould ſend their troops into their reſpective quarters? Will the province of Holland then narrow her military line? In this ſuppoſition, is there nothing to be feared from the Free-corps? and how may ſhe anſwer for them? What will be the determinate conſtitutional functions of the Stadtholder? What the relations of ſubordination and influence toward the deputy counſellors? What is the reformation intended to be made in the regulations?

Theſe and a thouſand other particulars are of conſequence to me, if I am to be of any ſervice in the buſineſs, otherwiſe I need none of them. But it is to me indiſpenſable that you ſhould immediately and preciſely inform me how I ought to act and ſpeak, how far I am to go, and where to ſtop.

Be kind enough to obſerve that it is requiſite this ſtep ſhould be kept entirely ſecret from Count d'Eſt**, and that the intentions and proceedings of Baron Reede certainly do not merit that the Baron ſhould be betrayed.

A curious and very remarkable fact is that the Duke of Brunſwic was the firſt who ſpoke to Baron Reede of the Pruſſian troops being put in motion, and aſked him what effect he imagined it would have on the affairs of Holland if ſome regiments of cavalry were marched into, and, ſhould it be needful, if a camp were formed in, the principality of Cleves, which might be called a camp of pleaſure. Baron Reede replied, this was a very delicate ſtep, and it was ſcarcely poſſible the cabinet of Verſailles could remain an unconcerned ſpectator. Does the Duke deſire to be prime miniſter, be the event what it may? And has he unworthily deceived me? Or was it only his intention to acquire from Baron Reede ſuch information as might aid him to combat the propoſition of Count Hertzberg? The Dutch ambaſſador wiſhed to perſuade me of the firſt. I imagine he is ſincere; yet, to own the truth, the public would echo his opinion; for the Duke is in high renown for deceit. But here I ought to oppoſe the teſtimony of Count Hertzberg himſelf, who owned that the idea was his own, and who bitterly repeated, more than once,—"Ah! had not the Duke deſerted me!"—It is neceſſary to have heard the expreſſion and the accent to form any poſitive opinion on the ſubject, which to a certain point may be warranted.

January 5.

I found Baron Reede at the rendezvous, in the ſame temper of mind; and, if poſſible, more fervent, more zealous. The only delicacy in acting he required was that I ſhould not ſay he had written; in order, as he obſerved, that, ſhould theſe advances ſtill fail in their effect, a greater animoſity might not be the reſult. He related to me an example of this kind, concerning the ſucceſs of a confidential proceeding, which happened ſome years ago, between himſelf and M. de Gauſſin, at that time chargé d'affaires from France to Berlin, and who having deſcribed the buſineſs in terms too ardent to be accurate receives a miniſterial anſwer from M. de Vergennes, of the moſt kind and amicable complexion, which paſſing directly to the Stadtholder, through the medium of the cabinet of Berlin, was by no means found acceptable, as it might reaſonably have been ſuppoſed it would have been; and that this produced an additional degree of coldneſs. True it is that the Prince of Orange had not, at that time, experienced the ſtrength of his opponents; but this Prince is ſo paſſionate, and his mind is ſo perverſe, that the Princeſs herſelf is obliged to take the utmoſt precautions, when ſhe has any thing to communicate.

I promiſed Baron Reede to act entirely as he wiſhed; yet have not thought it the leſs my duty to relate the whole affair, well convinced that people only of very narrow minds pique themſelves on their policy; that M. de Calonne will think proper to know nothing of all this, except juſt as much as he ought to know; that in any caſe he will ſeem only to regard this overture as the ſimple attempt of two zealous men, who communicated a project which they ſuppoſed was moſt probable of ſucceſs. In reality, though it may be the moſt preſſing intereſt of the Stadtholder to obtain peace, how can our alliance with Holland be more effectually ſtrengthened than by the concurrence of the Stadtholder? And with reſpect to the individual intereſts of M. de Calonne, ſhould we happen to loſe M. de Vergennes, through age or ill health, who is there capable of diſputing the place with him who ſhall have promoted the commercial treaty between France and England, and have accompliſhed the pacification of Holland? Enough at preſent concerning the buſineſs in which I am engaged. Let us return to Pruſſia.

January 6.

Lieutenant-colonel Goltz has long been on cold terms, and even has quarrelled, with Biſhopſwerder. They had once been reconciled by the King, who felt that the firſt, being more firm of character, and more enterpriſing, had great advantages in the execution of affairs over the other, who was more the courtier, and more the humble ſervant of circumſtances. To avoid domeſtic ſcandal, he has appointed M. von Hanſtein, who poſſeſſes dignity, or rather haughtineſs; and M. von Pritwitz, a man of mediocrity, and a victim to the caprices of the late King, to be general aides-de-camp. Thus Biſhopſwerder, after he has done every thing in his power to remove all who had more underſtanding than himſelf from about the perſon of the King, having accompliſhed his purpoſe, and ſecured the Monarch ſolely to himſelf, knows not what he ſhall do with him.

Count Bruhl has found neither arrangements ready prepared, apartments furniſhed, nor perſons placed in the ſervice of the Prince Royal. The conſequences were—Ill-humour—A viſit to Welner—Not admitted—Viſit returned late, and by a card—Riſing diſcontent, which is encouraged by Biſhopſwerder, who ſuſpects Welner to have been

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ſoſtered concerning the nomination of the two general aides-de-camp.

A fact which appears very probable is that Welner, who is chriſtened by the people the little king, knows not how to perform three offices at once; and, as he fooliſhly believed he might yield to the eagerneſs of ſpeculators, and has had the meanneſs to enjoy the deſpicable flatteries of thoſe who ſix months ago treated him like a lacquais, his days have glided away in theſe perilous paſtimes of vanity. Buſineſs has been neglected, every thing is in arrear, and it is preſumed that, when he ſhall have been ſufficiently bandied by the intrigues of the malecontents, the ingratitude of thoſe whom he ſhall have ſerved, the arts of courtiers, and the ſnares of his own ſubalterns, his brain will be entirely turned.

It is at length determined the capitation tax ſhall not be enforced. Thus it is withdrawn after having been announced! Without conviction! Without a ſubſtitute!—What confuſion! What forebodings! From the ſhort proſpect of the morning of the reign, how portentous are the ſteps of futurity!

The ſending an envoy to London; which court has not yet returned the compliment.

Another envoy ſent to Holland; who, in every ſtep he has taken, has riſked the reputation of his Sovereign. It certainly was neceſſary either to act conſiſtently or totally to abſtain from acting.

The commiſſion of enquiry on the adminiſtration of the finances, which has been productive of nothing but injuſtice and rigour, toward individuals, without the leaſt advantage to the public.

Another commiſſion to examine the conduct of General Wartenberg, appointed with oſtentation, and ſuſpended in ſilence.

The ſuppreſſion of the adminiſtration of tobacco and ſnuff, which muſt be continued.

The project of the capitation tax, which is obliged to be withdrawn at the very moment it was to commence.

The convocation of the principal merchants of Pruſſia and Sileſia, which has generated nothing but diſcuſſion, ſuch as are proper to unveil the abſurdity of the rulers, and the wretchedneſs of the people.

Do not ſo many falſe ſteps, ſo many recedings, ſuppoſe adminiſtrators who have reflected but little, who are groping in the dark, and who are ignorant of the elements of the ſcience of governing?

Amid this ſeries of follies, we muſt nevertheleſs remark a good operation, which is truly beneficial. I ſpeak of the at preſent unlimited corn trade, and an annual exemption in behalf of that miſerable weſtern Pruſſia, the amount of which I do not yet know.

The domeſtic fermentation of the palace begins to be ſo great that it muſt ſoon become public. The agent of the wiſhes, or, more properly ſpeaking, of the ſecret whims, is in oppoſition to Biſhopſwerder and Welner, who are on cold terms with Mademoiſelle Voſs, who is

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deſirous that Madam Rietz ſhould be diſcarded, who will agree that Mademoiſelle Voſs ſhould be a rich miſtreſs but not a wife. Among this multitude of oppoſing wills, where each, except the King, acts for himſelf, we may enumerate his Majeſty's chamberlain, and the counſellor of Mademoiſelle Voſs, Reuſs; and the pacificator, the mediator, the counſellor, the temporizer, the preacher, Count Arnim.

The Sovereign, amid theſe riſing revolts, weathers the ſtorm to the beſt of his abilities. The jeweller Botſon has laid a complaint againſt Rietz, which occaſioned a quarrel that might have had conſequences, had not the King recollected that ten years might be neceſſary to replace a confident, whom he might have diſcharged in a moment of anger. The birth-day of the Count of Brandenburg was likewiſe a circumſtance which the Rietz party made ſubſervient to their intereſt. His Majeſty ſent for the mother to dinner, and peace was the reſtorer of ſerenity.

The maſter of the horſe, who was ſaid to have loſt his credit, appears to have riſen from the dead. Excluſive of his yellow ribband, which he hung over his ſhoulders on the laſt court day, and which excited burſts of laughter from every body, even from the miniſters, he requeſted his nephew might be created a count, and was anſwered with a—"So "be it."—The creating of a count is but a trifling evil, eſpecially when ſo many have been created; but never to poſſeſs a will of one's own is a ſerious reflection.

Would you wiſh for a picture of the ſinews of government, and active faculties of the governors?—Take the following feature.

Various remonſtrances had been made to the King finally to regulate the ſtate of expenditure, and the ſalaries of his officers. He replied that he intended to keep a court; and that, in order to regulate his expences, he firſt deſired to know the permanent ſtate of his revenues, according as they ſhould be collected and aſcertained by his new financiers. After reflecting on various phraſes, in all of which was repeated the word aſcertained, the miniſters under whoſe charge the exciſe and the daily expenditure were, began to have their apprehenſions. Hence followed a multitude of trifling taxes; ridiculous, hateful, and unproductive, which ſprung up in a ſingle night. Oyſters, cards, and an increaſe on the poſtage of letters, on ſtamps, on wines, eight groſchen per ell on taffeties, thirty-three per cent on furs.—They even went ſo far as to ſuppreſs the franchiſes of the princes of the houſehold. Not one of theſe new impoſts but was moſt gratuitouſly odious; for they retard what they are meant to effect, and are productive of nothing but a demonſtration of the heavy ſtupidity of thoſe who neither can procure money nor ſatisfy the public.

PS. I have received a voluminous diſpatch in cypher from Courland, the contents of which it is impoſſible I ſhould at preſent ſend. I can only confirm former intelligence, that the chamberlain Howen, who is at preſent Burgrave, diſpoſes of the province and is wholly Ruſſian: the circumſtances by the next courier.

LETTER LXIII.

January 8th, 1787.

THE following is the ſubſtance of the news from Courland, as authentic as can poſſibly be procured.

The chamberlain Howen, an able man, the firſt and the only perſon of underſtanding in the country—(for the chancellor Taubé, who might otherwiſe counterpoiſe his influence, is deſtitute of mind and character)—Howen, I ſay, is become Ober Burgrave, by the ſudden death of the prime miniſter, Klopman.—After this event followed a torrent of re-placings and de-placings, in none of which you are intereſted, and concerning which it will be ſufficient for you to know that every recommendation of the Duke has been abſolutely rejected and contemned. The Baron of Meſt-Machor, the Ruſſian envoy, by a formal and direct recommendation,

dation, occaſioned the election to alight on Howen, who once was the violent enemy of the Ruſſians, by whom he had been carried off from Warſaw, where he reſided as envoy from Courland, and baniſhed into Siberia. Here he remained ſeveral years. By a concurrence of circumſtances he is become Ruſſian. It appears that the cabinet of Peterſburg has preferred the gaining of its purpoſe by gentle meaſures, and intends amicably to accompliſh all its deſigns on Courland. Howen is in reality Duke of Courland, for he executes all the functions of the dukedom, and converts or overawes all opponents. Woronzow, Soltikow, Belſborotko, and Potemkin are abſolute maſters of Courland, as they are of Ruſſia; with this only difference that Potemkin, who poſſeſſes a library of mortgages and bank-bills, who pays nobody, corrupts every body, who ſubjects all by the energy of his will and the extent of his views, ſoars above Belſborotko, who is politically his friend; above Woronzow, who is capable but timid; and above Soltikow, who is wholly devoted to the Grand Duke.

The Duke of Courland will probably return no more to his country, becauſe he has ruined his affairs in Ruſſia, is unable to alter any thing which has been done in his abſence, is entangled in lawſuits, and by complaints laid againſt him without number, and becauſe that the regency which preſerves a good underſtanding with the chiefs of the equeſtrian order, under the guidance of Howen, reigns with moderation, conformable to the laws of the land, and brings down benedictions on its adminiſtration; inſomuch that the people, who were ready to revolt becauſe they were threatened by and already were ſuffering famine, wiſh affairs to continue in their preſent train. It is to them of little import whether the government be or be not Ruſſian, if miſery be not entailed on them. There is no poſſibility of reverſing a ſyſtem thus ſtable. Some ſixty conſiderable eſtates have been granted as fiefs or farms. All the vacant places have been beſtowed on perſons of the greateſt influence, abroad and at home; ſo that we may ſay the party of the adminiſtration of Howen, or of the Ruſſians in Courland, includes every body. Several millions muſt be expended to counterpoiſe ſuch a preponderance; and, if to counterpoiſe were to vanquiſh, victory itſelf would not be worth expences ſo great.

One of the principal complaints againſt the Duke is the deterioration of Courland, which has been effected by the total impoveriſhment of the peaſants, and the lands, the ruin of the foreſts, and the exportation of the ducal revenues into foreign countries. But the grand crime, the crime not to be forgiven, is having diſpleaſed Ruſſia. The Empreſs has been ſo enraged againſt him, by his Anti-Ruſſian proceedings in Courland, that ſhe herſelf ſaid,—"The King of France would not "have injured me as the Duke of Cour-"land has dared to do."—She probably meant, beſtowing Courland on Pruſſia.

I cannot perceive how we can act better, in our preſent ſituation, than to wait with patience. Our young man will certainly have a place in his own country. Should it be thought proper to beſtow on him the title of Conſul, with leave to wear our uniform, and a captain's commiſſion, from which he might derive reſpect, he aſks nothing more; and we ſhould poſſeſs an intelligent, zealous, and incorruptible centinel, who, from ſo well-ſituated a poſt, might inform us of whatever was paſſing in the north, and aid us in what relates to commerce.

I need not obſerve that great changes are not effected in a day. We may however depend upon a confirmation of the maritime company as a ſymptomatic anecdote of importance. Struenſee has acted in a pleaſant manner.—"Gentlemen," ſaid he, to the merchants of Königſberg and Pruſſia, "nothing can be more "excellent than a free trade; but it is "very juſt that you ſhould buy all the "ſalt in our warehouſes."—'True.'—"Very good. You muſt therefore give "us ſecurity for one million two hundred "thouſand crowns, as well as pay a hun-

"dred and twenty thouſand crowns, annually, to the proprietors, in return for "the ten per cent for which we are accountable; for public good will not "admit an injury to be committed on "private right."—'True.'—"Very good! "And, for the ſame reaſon, you muſt "pay five per cent which has been legally "granted on the new ſhares."—'True.' "—Very excellent, Gentlemen! But "who are to be your ſecurities? Or, at "leaſt, where are your funds?"—'Oh, we 'will form a company.'—"A company, "Gentlemen! One company is as good "as another. Why ſhould not the "King give the preference to the company that actually exiſts?"

All projects for the freedom of trade will, like this, go off *in fumo*; and, what is ſtill more fatal if poſſible, concluſions will be drawn, from the ignorance of the preſent adminiſtration, in favour of the impoſſibility of changing former regulations. Such are Kings without a will; ſuch is the preſent, and ſuch will he live and die! The other was all ſoul; this is all body. The ſymptoms of his incapacity increaſe with aggravation. I ſhall have continual occaſion to repeat nearly the ſame words, the ſame opinions, the ſame remarks. But here however may be added what I think a fact of weight, which is that one of the cauſes of the torpor of interior adminiſtration is the miſunderſtanding which reigns in the miniſtry. Four miniſters are in oppoſition to two, and the ſeventh remains neuter. Meſſieurs Gaudi and Werder, who keep ſhifting the helm of finance, are counteracted by Meſſieurs Heinitz, Arnim, Schulemburg, and Blumenthal. The former of the four laſt is accuſed of attempting to add the department of the mines to that of the finances. In the mean time the expediting of buſineſs continues with Welner, and the impulſe of influence with Biſhopſwerder.

The latter, either ſincerely or inſidiouſly, has become the aſſociate of the plan to bring Prince Henry again into power, at leaſt in military affairs. The Prince, for ſeveral years, has not been preſent at the manœuvres. It is affirmed that he not only will be this year but that he will be made a kind of inſpector general. The negotiation is carried on with great ſecrecy, by General Moellendorf and the favourite.

The marriage of Mademoiſelle Voſs is again in report. Certain it is that every ſpecies of trinkets has been purchaſed, every kind of preparation has been made, and that a journey is rumoured.—Moſt of theſe circumſtances are kept very ſecret; but I am well aſſured of their truth, becauſe I have them from the Rietz family, who are very much intereſted in preventing the union being accompliſhed, under certain formalities, and who conſequently are very actively on the watch. But I know not what form they will beſtow on this half-conjugal half-concubine ſtate. Yeſterday however, when I ſupped with the King, I had ocular demonſtration there was no longer any reſtraint laid on ſpeaking together in public.

The King, at ſupper, aſked me—“Who

“ is one M. de Laſeau ?”—‘ Du Saux, ‘ perhaps, Sire.’—“ Yes, Du Saux.”—‘ A ‘ member of our academy of inſcriptions.’ —“ He has ſent me a large work on gaming.”—‘ Alas ! Sire, you maſters of the ‘ world only have the power of effecting ‘ the deſtruction of gaming. Our books ‘ will accomplish but little.’—“ But he “ has embarraſſed me by paying me a “ compliment which I by no means “ merit.”—‘ There are many, Sire, which ‘ you are too prudent to be in haſte to ‘ merit.’—“ He has congratulated me on “ having aboliſhed the Lotto ; I wiſh it “ were true, but it is not.”—‘ A wiſh ‘ from your Majeſty will effect much.’— “ I am ſome thanks in your debt, on this “ ſubject, for this is one of the good “ counſels you gave me in a certain “ writing (*x*).”—(I made a low bow)— “ But you muſt excuſe me for a time. “ There are funds aſſigned on that vile “ Lotto ; the military ſchool, for ex- “ ample.”—‘ Fortunately, Sire, a momen-

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(*x*) Meaning the Memorial. T.

'tary deficiency of fifty thouſand crowns 'is not a thing to inſpire the richeſt 'King on earth, in ready money, with 'any great apprehenſions.'—"True, but "agreements"—'Will not be violated 'when the parties are reimburſed, or 'have any proportionate remuneration. 'Surely, ſince deſpotiſm has ſo often 'been employed to do ill, it might for 'once effect good.'—"Oh oh! Then "you are ſomewhat reconciled to deſpotiſm."—'Who can avoid being reconciled to it, Sire, where one head has 'four hundred thouſand arms?'—He laughed with a ſimple kind of grin, was informed the comedy was going to begin, and here ended our converſation.—You perceive there is ſtill ſome deſire of being praiſed in this lethargic ſoul.

PS. Launay this night departed incognito. I imagine you will give very ſerious offence to the cabinet of Berlin, if you do not prevent him going to preſs, as is his intention.

LETTER LXIV.

January 13*th*, 1787.

I Believe I have at length diſcovered what the Emperor was hatching here. He has, ſans circumlocution, propoſed to ſuffer Pruſſia to appropriate the remainder of Poland to itſelf, provided he might act in like manner by Bavaria. Fortunately the bait was too groſs. It was perceived he offered the gift of a country which he had not the power to beſtow, and the invaſion of which would be oppoſed by Ruſſia, that he might, without impediment, ſeize on another which had been refuſed him, and of which, if once acquired, he never after could have been robbed. Your ambaſſador, probably, has diſcovered this long before me; from whom you will have learnt the circumſtances. To him the diſcovery was an affair of no difficulty; for confidence is eaſily placed, in politics, when it is determined that the propoſal ſhall be rejected; beſide that it is a prodigious ſtep in advance to have the right of conferring with miniſters, from whom that may be divined which is not aſked. For my own part, I can only inform you intrigues and machinations are carried on, and the very moment I diſcover more I ſhall conſider it as my duty to ſend you intelligence. But I do not ſuppoſe I can give you any new information of this kind. I have only promiſed to ſupply you with the current news of the court and the country. The reſt is out of my ſphere. I want the neceſſary means effectually to arrive at the truth. God grant it never ſhould enter the head of the Emperor to allure the King of Pruſſia more adroitly, and to ſay to him,—"Suffer me to take Bavaria, and I will ſuffer "you to ſeize on Saxony; by which you "will acquire the fineſt country in Germany, a formidable frontier, and near "two millions of ſubjects; and by which, "in a word, you will extend, round, and "conſolidate your dominions. Neither "ſhall we have any great difficulties to "combat. All of them may be obviated "by making the Elector king of Poland. "The Saxon family poſſeſs the mania of "royalty; and, even ſhould the kingdom "become hereditary, wherein would "be the inconvenience? It is good, or at "leaſt it very ſoon will be good, to poſſeſs "a ſtrong barrier againſt Ruſſia."

Should they ever conceive ſuch a project, it would be executed, with or without the conſent of all Europe. But this they have not conceived. One is too inconſiſtent, the other too incapable; and after ſome diſputes, more or leſs ſerious, the Emperor will filch a village perhaps from Bavaria, and the King of Pruſſia continue to crouch under his nullity.

The misfortune is that to treat him thus is to treat him with indulgence. The following is a fact intirely ſecret but certain; and which, better than all thoſe my preceding diſpatches contain, will teach you to judge the man. Within this fortnight he has paid a debt of a million of crowns to the Emperor. And what was this debt?—The Empreſs Queen had lent the Prince Royal, now King of Pruſſia, a million of florins; which by accumulating intereſt had become a million of crowns.—And when?—In the year 1778, during the Bavarian campaign, the fatigues of which they imagined themſelves certain Frederic II. would ſink under. Thus was Frederic William baſe enough to accept the money of Auſtria, which he has had the imbecillity to repay (*y*). He had not the ſenſe to ſay, "*My ſucceſſor will repay you.*" No, he ſanctions the act of the Imperial court when lending money to the Princes Royal of Pruſſia. He imagines he has fulfilled his duties, as a ſovereign, when

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(*y*) If it be a crime for a prince to pay his debts, even though indebted to an enemy, it is a crime which no man but a politician can diſcover. It is not unpleaſant to remark that Frederic II. when Prince Royal, eagerly negotiated a loan in Ruſſia, to promote which, his letters to Count Suhm inform us, he ſent the Grand Duke—a dried ſalmon. Voltaire expected the largeſt diamond in the crown; he received a keg of wine. T.

he has had the honeſty to pay his debts, as an individual.

The ſum-total of theſe debts amount to nine millions of crowns; and, though I do not indeed ſuppoſe that the agents are any loſers, it is nevertheleſs true that the firſt months of his reign will coſt Pruſſia thirty-ſix millions, excluſive of common expences, gifts, gratifications, penſions, &c. The extraordinaries of the firſt campaign, in which it was neceſſary to remount all the cavalry, did not coſt Frederic II. more than five millions, or five millions and a half of crowns (leſs than a million ſterling).

I have not yet depicted the Monarch as a warrior; the trade gives him the ſpleen, its minutiæ fatigue him, and he is weary of the company of generals. He goes to Potſdam, comes on the parade, gives the word, dines, and departs. He went on Wedneſday to the houſe of exerciſe at Berlin, uttered a phraſe or two, bade the troops march, and vaniſhed. And this is the houſe in which Frederic II. loaded with fame and years, regularly paſſed two hours daily, in the depth of winter, in diſciplining, grumbling, curſing, praiſing, in a word in keeping the tormented troops in perpetual action, who ſtill were tranſported to ſee the *old one*, for that was the epithet they gave him, at their head.

But a more important point is the new military regulations, which have been conceived, planned, approved, and, as it is ſaid, are going to be printed, without either having been communicated to Prince Henry or the Duke of Brunſwic. The tendency of this new plan is nothing leſs than the deſtruction of the army. The ſeven beſt regiments are converted into light troops, and among others that of Wunſch. I am yet unacquainted with the particulars of the changes made, but, according to the opinion of General Moellendorf, had Laſcy himſelf been their promoter, they would have been juſt as they are. The worthy Moellendorf is humbled, diſcouraged, afflicted. All is under the direction of Goltz, who is haughty, incapable of diſcuſſion, and who holds it as a principle that the army is too expenſive, and too numerous, in times of peace. He is perpetually embroiled with Biſhopſwerder, often obliged to attend to buſineſs of this kind, and in ſome manner under the neceſſity of interfering in affairs, in the conduct of which he is not ſuppoſed to be equally well verſed.

The Duke of Brunſwic does not come. He replied to ſome perſon who had complimented him on his promotion, and who, in a letter, had ſuppoſed he was ſoon expected to arrive at Berlin, that he had been exceedingly flattered by receiving a title, which however he did not think he had merited; that he never had, and never ſhould, come to Berlin, unleſs ſent for; and of this he ſaw no immediate proſpect. I have very good information that he is exceedingly diſguſted, and will doubtleſs be ſo more than ever, ſhould the conſtitution of the army be reverſed without his opinion being aſked, who is the only field-marſhal of Pruſſia.

I do not ſcruple to affirm that, by the

aid of a thouſand guineas, in caſe of need, the whole ſecrets of the cabinet of Berlin might be perfectly known. The papers which continually are ſpread upon the tables of the King might be read and copied, by two clerks, four valets de chambre, ſix or eight footmen, and two pages, the women not included. For this reaſon the Emperor has an exact and daily journal of the proceedings of the King, and would be acquainted with all his projects, were he really to project any thing.

Never did kingdom announce a more ſpeedy decline. It is ſapped on every ſide at once. The means of receipt are diminiſhed, the expences are multiplied, principles are deſpiſed, the public opinion ſported with, the army enfeebled, the very few people who are capable of being employed are diſcouraged. Thoſe even are diſguſted to pleaſe whom all others have been offended. Every foreigner of merit is kept at a diſtance, and the King is ſurrounded by the vulgar and the vile, that he may be thought to reign alone. This fatal phrenzy is the moſt fruitful cauſe of all the evil which at preſent exiſts, and of that which is preparing for the future.

Were I to remain here ten years longer I might furniſh you with new particulars, but could not draw any new conſequence. The man is judged; his creatures are judged; the ſyſtem is judged. No change, no poſſible improvement, can take place, ſo long as there ſhall be no firſt miniſter. When I ſay no change, I do not, by any means, wiſh you to underſtand no perſon ſhall be diſmiſſed. Sand ſhall ſucceed to ſand, but ſand it ſtill ſhall be, and nothing better, till piles ſhall be ſunken on which a foundation may be laid. What therefore ſhould I do here henceforth? I can be of no uſe; yet nothing but utility, great, direct, immediate utility, could reconcile me to the extreme indecency of the preſent amphibious exiſtence which has been conferred upon me, ſhould this exiſtence be prolonged.

I am obliged to repeat that my abilities, what I merit, and what I am worth, ought at preſent to be known to the King, and to the miniſtry. If I am capable of nothing, and merit nothing, I am, while here, a bad bargain. If I am of ſome worth, and may effect ſome good purpoſe; if nine months, for nine months will have paſſed away before I ſhall return; if, I ſay, a ſubaltern teſt of nine months, moſt painful in itſelf, and during which I have encountered a thouſand and a thouſand impediments without once being aided, have enabled me to acquire ſome knowledge of men, ſome information, ſome ſagacity, without enumerating the precious contents of my port folio, I am then in duty bound to myſelf to aſk and either to obtain a place or to return to a private ſtation, which will neither be ſo fatiguing to body nor mind, nor ſo barren of fame.

For theſe reaſons, I undiſguiſedly declare, or rather repeat, I cannot remain here; and I requeſt my return may be formally authoriſed; whether it be intended to employ me hereafter, or to reſtore me to myſelf. I certainly ſhall not revolt at any kind of uſeful occupation. My feelings are not ſuperannuated, and, though my enthuſiaſm may be benumbed, it is not extinct. I have in my ſenſations at this moment a ſtrong proof to the contrary. The day which you inform me you have fixed for the convocation of the notables I ſhall regard as one of the moſt glorious days of my life. This convocation no doubt will ſoon be followed by a national aſſembly, and here I contemplate renovating order, which ſhall give new life to the monarchy. I ſhould think myſelf loaded with honours were I but the meaneſt ſecretary of that aſſembly, the project of which I had the happineſs to communicate, and to which there is ſo much need that you ſhould appertain, or rather that you ſhould become its ſoul.—But to remain here, condemned to the rack, in company with fools, obliged to ſound and to wade through the fœtid meanderings of an adminiſtration, each day of which is ſignalized by ſome new trait of cowardice and ſtupidity, this is beyond my ſtrength; for I perceive no good purpoſe it can effect. Send me therefore my recal, and let me know whether I am to paſs through Holland.

There, for example, I would accept a ſecret commiſſion; becauſe pacification there demands, as an indiſpenſable preliminary, a ſecret agent, who can ſee and ſpeak the truth, and who is capable of captivating confidence. I do not believe foreign politics afford any opportunity of rendering greater ſervice to France. I fear, ſince it is neceſſary I ſhould confeſs my fears, we rely too much on the aſcendency which the ariſtocracy has gained, of late years, over the Stadtholderſhip. I think I perceive the ſyſtem of the patriots has not acquired any decided ſuperiority, except in the province of Holland, which does but diſturb its co-eſtates, or at leaſt in as much as it excites their animoſities. Nay, at Amſterdam itſelf, the very hot-bed of Anti-Stadtholder ſentiments, was not the grand council, though the firſt to riſe againſt the conceſſion of the Scotch brigade to England, the firſt to plead in favour of military convoys, and to demand the diſmiſſion of the Duke Louis of Brunſwic? Was it not alſo the firſt to vote for a ſeparate peace with England, and for the acceptance of the mediation of Ruſſia? Was not its admiralty, ſeveral of the members of which depend on the regency, highly involved in the plot which occaſioned the failure of the Breſt expedition?—How can it be otherwiſe? The ſovereign council is only in poſſeſſion of an imaginary authority. It is the burgomaſters, who are annually changed; or even the preſident of the burgomaſters, who is changed once in three months; or rather, in fine, ſuch among the burgomaſters as gain ſome influence of underſtanding or character over the others, who iſſue thoſe orders that direct the important vote of the city of Amſterdam, in the aſſembly of the States. When we recollect that the college of ſheriffs, old and new, from which the burgomaſters are elected, contains a great number of Engliſh partiſans, and depends in ſome manner on the Stadtholder, who chooſes thoſe ſheriffs, I know not how we can depend upon the future ſyſtem of that city.

It is for ſuch reaſons that I cannot underſtand why it ſhould not be for our intereſt to bring theſe diſputes to a concluſion, if we do not wiſh to annul the Stadtholderſhip, which cannot be annulled without giving birth to foreign and domeſtic convulſions. And is it poſſible we ſhould wiſh for war? We ought not doubtleſs to ſuffer the family of the Stadtholder to remain poſſeſſed of legiſlative power, in the three provinces of Guelderland, Utrecht, and Over Yſſel, by what is called the rules of the regency; for this, added to the ſame prerogative in the provinces of Zealand and Groningen, inclines the balance exceſſively in his favour. Neither can it be doubted but that the power of the Stadtholder ought to be ſubſervient to the legiſlative power of the ſtates. It is of equal importance to our ſyſtem, or rather to the regular ſyſtem of foreign politics, that the legiſlative power of the ſtates ſhould be directed and maintained by the uniform influence of the people. But the pretenſions and paſſions of individuals, and the private intereſts of the members of an ariſtocracy, have, in all countries, too often been ſuppoſed the public intereſt; which is peculiarly true here, where the union of the Seven Provinces was formed in troubleſome times, and by the effect of chance, ſince the people did not think of erecting a republican government till the ſovereignty had firſt been refuſed by France and England. Hence it reſulted that the regents and the people never were agreed concerning the limitation of their rights and reciprocal duties. The regents have neceſſarily laboured to render themſelves independent of the people; and the people, ſuppoſing themſelves abſolute, ſince they never conſigned over the ſovereignty to the regents, nor have had any intereſt to ſupport them, have on all critical occaſions counteracted their attempts. This was the origin of the Stadtholder party, and of that fluctuation which has happened between the deſpotic will of an individual, the perfidious tergiverſations of the wavering, the feeble ariſtocratical colleges, and the impetuoſity of an enraged populace. Should ever a link of union exiſt between the citizens and the regents, the deſpotiſm of the Stadtholder and the caprices of the oligarchy will have an end; but, while no ſuch union does exiſt, while the mode in which the people influence the government remains undetermined, ſo long muſt the ſyſtem of France remain inſecure.

Preſerve the confederate conſtitution, between the provinces and the republican form, in its reciprocal ſtate. Or, to reduce the propoſition to the moſt ſimple terms, INSTEAD OF THE ODIOUS AND ILLEGAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STADTHOLDER, OR OF A BURGOMASTER, SUBSTITUTE THE REGULAR AND SALUTARY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITIZENS.

ZENS (z). Such ſhould be the palladium of the republic; ſuch the purſuit of our politics.

This reſtriction rather demands a concurrence of circumſtances than the ſhock of contention. And ſhall we be able to effect it by thoſe acts of violence which are attributed to us, even though they ſhould not be ours, or by increaſing fermentation on one part, and on the other ſuſpicion? Have we not made our influence and our power ſufficiently felt? Is it not time to ſhew that we wiſh only for the abolition of the Stadtholder regulations, and not that of the Stadtholderſhip? And how ſhall we conclude without making the concluſion tragical, ſince it is not in human wiſdom to calculate all poſſible conſequences, if we cannot effectually perſuade the perſons at Nimeguen (a) that ſuch is our real and ſole ſyſtem.

(z) Recommendations implies elections, or appointments. T.

(a) The Princeſs of Orange and her party. T.

Such is the rough draught of my profeſſion of faith, relative to the affairs of Holland. From what I have ſaid, and according to theſe principles, which I ſhall more circumſtantially develope, if required, in a written memorial, it may be eſtimated whether I can or cannot be uſeful in the country; farther ſuppoſing me poſſeſſed of local information, which I ſhall with facility acquire.

LETTER LXV.

January 16th, 1787.

IN the opinion of thoſe who know that revolutions effected by arms are not often thoſe that overturn ſtates, it is truly a revolution in the Pruſſian monarchy to behold an example, for the firſt time, of a titled miſtreſs, who is on the point of ſequeſtrating the King, of forming a diſtinct court, of exciting cabals which ſhall be communicated from the palace to the *legions*, and of arranging affairs, favourites, adminiſtration, and grants, after a manner abſolutely unknown to theſe cold and phlegmatic countries. The moment of the diſgrace, and the conſequent elevation, of Mademoiſelle Voſs approaches. Hence intrigues, ſarcaſms, opinions, and conjectures, or rather predictions.—Amid this maſs of ſuppoſitions, true or falſe, the following is what I can collect, which ſeems to have moſt probability. My tranſlation is according to the text of one of the former friends of Mademoiſelle Voſs, to whom ſhe has opened her heart.

This new Joan of Arc, on whoſe head devotion would invoke the nuptial benediction, has been perſuaded that it is her duty to renounce marriage; and ſacrifice herſelf, firſt to her country; in the ſecond place to her lover's glory; and finally to her family's advantage. The country, ſay her adviſers, will gain a protectreſs who will remove covetous and perverſe counſellors. The glory of the Monarch will not be tarniſhed by a double marriage; and her family will not be expoſed to the danger of beholding her a momentary princeſs, and preſently afterward exiled to an old caſtle, with ſome trifling penſion. They affirm favour will be the more rapturous ſhould rapture not be ſecured by the rites of Hymen; and that the inſtant this favour commences ſhe will rain gold on her relations, with dignities and gratuities of every kind. Religious motives have been added to motives of convenience. It has been demonſtrated that there was leſs evil in condeſcenſion than in contracting a pretended marriage, while the former one remained in full force. At length it was concluded that this *victim to her country's good* ſhould be taken to Potſdam, and offered up at Sans Souci, A houſe has been prepared, ſumptuouſly furniſhed; ſay ſome, and ſimply, according to others; and at which are all the paraphernalia of a favourite.

An anecdote truly inconceivable, which requires confirmation, and which I am ſtill averſe to believe, is circulated; that the King proſtitutes his daughter, the Princeſs Frederica, to be the companion of his miſtreſs.

Mademoiſelle Voſs has a kind of natural wit, ſome information, is rather wilful than firm, and is very obviouſly awkward, which ſhe endeavours to diſguiſe by aſſuming an air of ſimplicity, She is ugly, and that even to a degree;

and her only excellence is the goodneſs of her complexion, which I think rather wan than white, and a fine neck; over which ſhe threw a double handkerchief, the other day, as ſhe was leaving Prince Henry's comedy, to croſs the apartments, ſaying to the Princeſs Frederica—"I "muſt take good care of them, for it is "after theſe they run."—Judge what muſt be the manners of princeſſes who can laugh at ſuch an expreſſion. It is this mixture of eccentric licentiouſneſs (which ſhe accompanies with airs of ignorant innocence) and veſtal ſeverity, which the world ſays has ſeduced the King. Mademoiſelle Voſs, who holds it ridiculous to be German, and who is tolerably well acquainted with the Engliſh language, affects the Anglomania to exceſs, and thinks it a proof of politeneſs not to love the French. Her vanity, which has found itſelf under reſtraint, when in company with ſome amiable people of that nation, hates thoſe it cannot imitate; more eſpecially becauſe her ſarcaſms ſometimes are returned with intereſt.

Thus, for inſtance, the other day, I could not keep ſilence, when I heard an exclamation—"Oh! Heavens! when "ſhall I ſee, when ſhall we have an "Engliſh play! I really ſhould expire "with rapture!"—'For my part, Made-'moiſelle,' ſaid I, drily, 'I rather wiſh 'you may not, ſooner than you imagine, 'ſtand in need of French play (*b*).'—All thoſe who began to be offended by her high airs ſmiled; and Prince Henry, who pretended not to hear her, laughed aloud. Her face was ſuffuſed with bluſhes, and ſhe did not anſwer a word; but it is eaſy to puniſh, difficult to correct.

(*b*) The wit, which is obſcure and almoſt unintelligible in the original, is wholly ſo in a tranſlation.—Puns ſeldom can be tranſlated. The French is—*O mon Dieu! Quand verrai-je donc, quand y aura-t-il ici un ſpectacle Anglois? Ah! J'en mourrois de joie!—Je déſire, Mademoiſelle, lui dis-je aſſez ſéchement, que vous n'ayez beſoin, plutôt que vous ne croyez, d'un ſpectacle François.* By the word *ſpectacle* I imagine the author meant thoſe *ſhewy* airs of which, he ſuppoſed, the lady would ſoon ſtand in need, to captivate the King, when the charm of novelty ſhould have diſappeared. T.

Sho

She has hitherto declared open war againſt the myſtics, and deteſts the daughters of the chief favourite, who are maids of honour to the Queen. But, as amidſt her weakneſſes ſhe is tranſported by devotion even to ſuperſtition, nothing may be depended on for futurity. Should ambition ſucceed primary ſenſations, it is to be preſumed her family will govern the ſtate. At the head of this family ſtands Count Finckenſtein, whoſe tranquillity would not be diſturbed by the fall of the empire, but who would with inexpreſſible joy contemplate his children enacting great parts. Next in rank is Count Schulemburg, who has newly been brought into the miniſtry; an active man, formerly even too buſy, but who ſeems to perceive that thoſe who keep moſt in the back ground become the principal figures. This family preſerves an inveterate hatred againſt Welner, who formerly carried off or ſeduced one of their relations, who is at preſent his wife. To theſe we may add the preſident Voſs, the brother of the beauty; who at leaſt poſſeſſes that ſpirit of calculation, and that German avidity, by which ſuch perſons profit, whenever fortune falls in their way. Should Mademoiſelle Voſs render her ſituation in any degree ſubſervient to ſuch purpoſes, ſhe muſt, while at Potſdam, prepare the diſmiſſion of Biſhopſwerder and Welner, or render them uſeleſs; for it is more the mode in Germany to diſpenſe with ſervice than to diſmiſs. She herſelf may poſſibly be ill guided, and may confide in the firſt who ſhall happen to be preſent, for ſhe is indiſcreet. She depends on the conſtancy of her lover; for ſhe is yet unexperienced in the *gratitude* of mankind. Having never yet obliged any body, ſhe never yet has rendered any one ungrateful.

Should this happen, affairs will remain in their preſent ſtate, or grow worſe. The King will ſhut himſelf up at Potſdam; whence however he will frequently make excurſions to Berlin, becauſe he has contracted a habit of reſtleſſneſs, and becauſe his favourite ſeraglio will always be at a brothel. He will then be totally idle, will tolerate rapaciouſneſs, and, as much as he is able, haſten the kingdom's ruin, toward which it tends as rapidly as preſent circumſtances and the *vis inertiæ* of the German character will allow; which does not permit madmen to commit any thing more than follies; and preſerves men from the deſtructive delirium of the paſſions.

Add to this, the Emperor dares attempt nothing, is conſiſtent in nothing, concludes nothing, that he approaches his end, and that all his brothers are pacific.—I ſhould not be aſtoniſhed were the hog of Epicurus, who at leaſt is not addicted to pomp, and conſequently will not of himſelf ruin the treaſury, to acquire, thanks to circumſtances and intereſted men, a kind of glory during his reign.

Military regulations are again mentioned. The regiments of the line are not to be ruined, but it ſeems there is an intention to form a certain number of battalions of chaſſeurs, who under good regulations may become uſeful; and this indeed was the deſign of Frederic II. Nothing yet can be affirmed on the ſubject, except that it is exceedingly ſtrange that Frederic William ſhould imagine himſelf able to effect any reform, the œconomical part excepted, in the military ſyſtem, and in the army of Frederic II.

Prince Henry probably will have ſome influence in the army. His name ſtands the firſt on the liſt, although a field-marſhal has been appointed. The King ſent him the liſt yeſterday, to aſſure him it was ſo, by M. von Goltz himſelf. They have given the child a bauble. What his military influence is to be muſt remain a ſecret, till the appearance of the new regulations. He is often viſited by the general aides-de-camp. Whether this is or is not known to the King is doubtful, and, if known, it is evident deceit only is meant, which indeed is a very fruitleſs trouble. He has no plan contrary to the politics of the kingdom, I do not ſay of the cabinet, for cabinet there is none. Indeed he has no plan whatever.

Count Goertz is recalled, of which Count Hertzberg was this morning ignorant. There cannot be a better proof that there is no deſire to interfere in the affairs of Holland, or not openly; nor ſimply to expoſe the nation to a war, to promote the intereſts of the Stadtholder. Of this unfortunately the houſe of Orange is not perſuaded, but of the contrary, if I may judge from the letter of the Princeſs, which came by the courier of this morning, a part of which I read as ſoon as it was decyphered. It is in this point of view that my journey to Nimeguen, under a borrowed name, and with ſecret authority, known only to her and me, may become uſeful. In this ſame letter I have read that the patriots are endeavouring to effect a loan of ſixteen millions of florins, or upward of one million three hundred thouſand pounds ſterling, at three per cent; although the province of Holland has never given more than two and a half per cent, and that they find difficulty in procuring the money.

There are three biſhops here; the Biſhop of Warmia, the Biſhop of Culm (who is of the houſe of Hohenzollern), and the Biſhop of Paphos. The firſt whom I mentioned to you, in my account of the King's journey into Pruſſia, is the ſame whom Frederic II. robbed of near eighty thouſand crowns per annum, by reducing the revenues of his biſhoprick to twenty-four thouſand from a hundred thouſand crowns; for ſuch was its value previous to the partition of Poland. The Monarch one day ſaid to him—"I have "not, in my own right, any great claims "on Paradiſe; let me entreat you to take "me in under your cloak."—'That I 'would willingly,' replied the prelate, 'if your Majeſty had not cut it ſo ſhort.' (*c*)—He is a man of pleaſure and of the world, and who is only acquainted with

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(*c*) This is better told in the *Anecdoten aus dem Leben Friedrichs des Zweiten*, where the Biſhop ſays he had cut his cloak too ſhort for it to hide *ſmuggled goods*. T the ſine arts, without other views or projects, religious or political.

The ſecond has been in the ſervice of France. He has the rage of preaching upon him, and of being eloquent; and the deſire of doing good; but as he has alſo the rage of running in debt, and getting children, his ſermons make no proſelytes, and his charities relieve no diſtreſs. The latter is a ſuffragan of Breſlau, formerly a great libertine, and a little of an atheiſt; at preſent impotent and ſuperannuated.

Theſe three prelates, who are to be reinforced by the Biſhop of Lujavia, and the new coadjutor, the Prince of Hohenloe, Canon of Straſburg, will hold no council; nor will they juſtify the fears the orthodox Lutherans, and all Saxony, who ſuppoſe the corner ſtone of the proteſtant religion to be laid here, have entertained concerning the inclination of the King to popery. The one came to obtain the order of the black eagle, and is gratified; the other for a benefice, vacant by the death of the Abbé Bathiani;

thiani; the Prince Biſhop of Warmia for a money loan, at two per cent, which may be ſufficient to ſatisfy his creditors.

Prince Henry, after having given a comedy and a grand ſupper, concluded the banquet with a ball, which began gloomily enough, and ſo continued. While ſome were dancing, in one room, others were gambling at the Lotto, in another. The King neither danced nor gambled; his evening was divided between Mademoiſelle Voſs and the Princeſs of Brunſwic. He ſpoke a word to M. von Grotthaus, but not a ſyllable to any body elſe. Moſt of the actors and ſpectators departed before him. The Biſhop of Warmia and the Marquis of Luccheſini were not ſo much as remarked. I would have defied the moſt penetrating obſerver to have ſuſpected there was a King in company. Languor and reſtraint were preſent, but neither eagerneſs nor flattery. He retired at half paſt twelve, after Mademoiſelle Voſs had departed. It is too viſible that ſhe is the ſoul of his ſoul, and that the ſoul which is thus wrapt up in a covering ſo coarſe is very diminutive. You muſt expect this continual repetition; the place of the ſcene may change, the ſcene itſelf never.

PS. The news of the recal of Goertz is falſe; and, from the manner in which it was conveyed to me, either Count d'Eſt * * wiſhed to lay a ſnare for me or has had a ſnare laid for himſelf. I am acquainted with circumſtances which make me believe it poſſible the negotiation ſhould again be reſumed. I have not time to ſay more.

The Duke of Brunſwic is ſent for, and will be here in a few days.

Count Wartenſleben, who had for five months been forgotten, yeſterday morning was preſented with between five and ſix hundred crowns per annum, and the command of the regiment of Roemer at Brandenburg.

LETTER LXVI.

January 19th, 1787. The day of my departure. This will not be ſent off ſooner than to-morrow, but it ought to arrive before me.

COUNT Schmettau, the complaiſant gentleman of the Princeſs Ferdinand, the indiſputable father of two of her children, had eight years quitted the army, which he left in the midſt of war, angered by a diſdainful expreſſion from Frederic II. and holding the rank of captain. He has lately been appointed a colonel, with the pay of fifteen hundred crowns per annum. The nomination has diſpleaſed the army, and particularly the General Aide-de-camp Goltz, who has been in harneſs five and twenty years, and ſtill only enjoys the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Count Schmettau has ſerved with honour, has received many wounds, nor does he want intelligence, particularly in the art of fortification. He has drawn a great number of plans which are much eſteemed. A military manual is alſo mentioned with praiſe, in which he teaches all that is neceſſary to be done, from the raw recruit to the field-marſhal. In fine this infringement on rank might have been ſupportable, but there has been, another which has excited the height of diſcontent.

The commiſſion of one Major Schenkendorff, the governor of the ſecond ſon of the King, who gives up his pupil, has been antedated, by which he leaps over ſix and thirty heads. This dangerous expedient, which Frederic II. never employed but on ſolemn occaſions, and in favour of diſtinguiſhed perſons, and which his ſucceſſor had before practiſed in behalf of Count Wartenſleben, does but tend to ſpread incertitude over the reality of military rank, and to be deſtructive of all emulation. It is beſide infinitely dangerous when employed by a feeble Prince, abſurd when reſorted to at the commencement of his reign, and muſt finally deprive the Monarch himſelf of one of his greateſt reſources, the point of honour.

He has depoſited five hundred thouſand crowns in the provincial treaſury, and has ſent the transfer to Mademoiſelle Voſs. Thus, happen what may, ſhe will always have an income of a thouſand a year, beſide diamonds, plate, jewels, furniture, and a houſe that has been purchaſed for her at Berlin; which is a pleaſure houſe, for ſhe does not intend to inhabit it. Her royal lover has himſelf imagined all theſe delicate attentions, and the conſequence is that the moſt diſintereſted of miſtreſſes has managed her affairs better than the moſt artful of coquettes could have done. Time will ſhew us whether her mind will aſpire to the rank of favourite Sultana.

New taxes are intended to be laid on cards, wines, foreign ſilks, oyſters, coffee, ſugar.—Contemptible reſources!—As the miniſtry are proceeding blindfold on all theſe matters, they are kept in a kind of ſecrecy. It ſeems they will rather make attempts than carry them into execution.

To-day, the birth-day of Prince Henry, the King has made him a preſent of a rich box, eſtimated to be worth twelve thouſand crowns, has ſet out the gold plate, and has done every thing which Frederic II. uſed to do, if we omit the rehearſal of a grand concert, the day before, in his chamber; for he has time for every thing except for buſineſs.

"Let there be bawdy-houſes on the "wings, and I will eaſily beat him in the "centre."—Beware that this ſaying of the Emperor does not become a prophecy. The prophet himſelf, fortunately, is not formidable; though I ſhould not be aſtoniſhed were he to be animated by ſo much torpor and baſeneſs; but, if he do not wait two years longer, the energy which the King wants may be found in the army.

PS. The Duke of Weimar is at Mayence, as it is ſaid, for the nomination

of

a coadjutor; but, as he viſits all the courts of the Upper and Lower Rhine, it would be good to keep a watchful eye over him, in my opinion.

END OF THE SECRET HISTORY.

LETTER,

OR

MEMORIAL,

PRESENTED TO

FREDERIC WILLIAM II.

KING OF PRUSSIA,

ON THE DAY OF HIS ACCESSION TO THE THRONE.

By COUNT MIRABEAU.

Arcus & ſtatuas demolitur & obſcurat oblivio, negligit carpitque poſteritas. Contrà contemptor ambitionis & infinitæ poteſtatis domitor animus ipſâ vetuſtate floreſcit; nec ab ullis magis laudatur quàm quibus minimè neceſſe eſt.

PLIN. Panegy.

ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME imputations are at once ſo odious and abſurd, that a perſon of ſenſe is not tempted to make them any reply. If he be a worthy man, ſilence is his only anſwer, when his calumniators are anonymous.

But, among the abuſe lately vented againſt me, and which I have enumerated rather among the rewards of my labours than eſtimated as a part of my misfortunes, there is one ſpecies of ſcandal to which I have not been inſenſible.

I have been accuſed of preſenting the reigning King of Pruſſia with a libel againſt the immortal Frederic II.

Frederic II. himſelf ſent for me, when I heſitated (much as I regretted, having lived his contemporary, to die unknown to him) leſt I ſhould diſturb his laſt moments, during which it was ſo natural to deſire to contemplate a great man. He deigned to welcome and diſtinguiſh me. No foreigner after me was admitted to his converſation. The laſt time he thus honoured me he had refuſed the juſt and eager requeſt which ſome of my countrymen, who had repaired to Berlin to ſee his military manœuvres, teſtified to be admitted to his preſence.——And could I, in return for ſo honourable a diſtinction, have written a libel!

Frederic is of himſelf too great for me ever to be tempted to write his panegyric. The very word is, in my apprehenſion, highly beneath a great King: it ſuppoſes exaggeration and inſincerity; the wreſting or diſſimulation of truth; a view of the ſubject only on the favourable ſide. Panegyric, in ſine, is to diſguiſe, or to betray, the truth; for this is one of its inevitable inconveniences; never was panegyric true or honourable that was devoid of reproof. I therefore have not, nor ſhall I ever have written the eulogy of Frederic II. but I have for theſe two years paſt been endeavouring to raiſe a monument to his memory, that ought not to be wholly unworthy of the labours by which his reign has been illuſtrated, or of thoſe grand leſſons which his ſucceſſes and his errors have equally taught. I have engaged in this conſiderable work, which will ſee the light in the courſe of the preſent year, and of which I make no ſecret (*a*).

The Memorial which I preſented to Frederic William II. on the day of his acceſſion to the throne, was entirely foreign to this plan. It was intended only to lay

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(*a*) This Memorial was publiſhed in 1787, and the work alluded to is—*L'Hiſtoire de la Monarchie Pruſſienne.* T.

before him the hopes of worthy men, who knew how many events, rather great than ſplendid, might take birth in Pruſſia under a new reign, and a prince in the prime of manhood.

The following is the Memorial in queſtion, which has been attributed to me as a crime. I lay my caſe before the world, that the world may judge. I have not altered a line, though my opinion has varied conſiderably, in ſome circumſtances, as will be ſeen in my work on Pruſſia. But I ſhould have reproached myſelf had I made any change, however trifling, in a memorial to which the venom of malignity has been imputed.

It has been often aſked what right I had to preſent ſuch a memorial.

Beſide the thanks which the preſent King of Pruſſia graciouſly was pleaſed to ſend me in a letter, he has not diſdained perſonally to addreſs me, in a numerous aſſembly, at the palace of his royal uncle, Prince Henry, a week be-

fore

ſore my departure from Berlin. This I have thought proper to make public, not in anſwer to idle tales, which never could deceive any perſon, but becauſe that the courage to love truth is even more honourable to a king, than that of ſpeaking truth is to a private perſon.

LETTER,

OR

MEMORIAL,

PRESENTED TO

FREDERIC WILLIAM II.

SIRE,

YOU now are king.—The day is come when it has pleaſed the Creator to confide to you the deſtiny of ſome millions of men, and the power of bringing much evil, or much good, upon the earth. The ſceptre deſcends to you at a period of life when man is capable of ſuſtaining its weight. You ought at preſent to be weary of vulgar enjoyments, to be dead to pleaſures, one only excepted—But this one is the only great, the ſole inexhauſtible pleaſure: a pleaſure hitherto interdicted, but now in your power. You are called to watch over the welfare of mankind.

The epocha at which you aſcend the throne is fortunate; knowledge daily expands; it has laboured, it continues to labour for you, and to collect wiſdom: it extends its influence over your nation, which ſo many circumſtances have contributed in part to deprive of its light. Reaſon has erected its rigorous empire. Men at preſent behold one of themſelves, only, though enveloped in royal robes, and from whom more than ever they require virtue. Their ſuffrages are not to be deſpiſed, and in their eyes but one ſpecies of glory is now attainable; all others are exhauſted. Military ſucceſs, political talents, the miraculous labours of art, the progreſs of the ſciences, have each alternately appeared reſplendent from one extremity of Europe to the other. But enlightened benevolence, which organizes, which vivifies empires, never yet has diſplayed itſelf pure and unmixed upon the throne. It is for you to ſeat it there. Yes, renown ſo ſublime is reſerved to you. Your predeceſſor has gained a ſufficient number of battles, perhaps too many; has too much wearied fame and her hundred tongues; has dried up the fountain of military fame for ſeveral reigns, for ſeveral ages. Should accident oblige you to become his imitator, it is neceſſary you ſhould appear worthy ſo to be, in which your Majeſty will not fail. But this is no reaſon why you ſhould painfully ſeek honour in the beaten path; wherein you can but rank as ſecond; while with greater eaſe you may create a ſuperior glory, and which ſhall be only yours. Frederic has enforced the admiration of men, but Frederic never obtained their love: Yes, Sire, their love may be wholly yours.

Sire, your mien, your ſtature, recal to mind the heroes of antiquity. Theſe to the ſoldier are much; much to the people, whoſe ſimple good ſenſe aſſociates the nobleſt qualities of mind to beauty of perſon; and ſuch was the firſt intention of nature. In your perſon the heroic form is embelliſhed by moſt remarkable tints of mildneſs, and calm benevolence, which promiſe not a little, even to philoſophers. You have a feeling heart, and the long neceſſity of behaving with circumſpection muſt have tempered that native bounty which otherwiſe might have made you too compliant. Your underſtanding is juſt; by this I have often been ſtruck. Your elocution is nervous and preciſe. You have ſeveral times demonſtrated that you poſſeſs an empire over yourſelf. You have not been educated, but you have not been ſpoiled; and men poſſeſſed of energy can educate themſelves. They are daily educated by experience, and thus are taught what they never forget. Your means are great. You are the only monarch in Europe who, far from being in debt, is poſſeſſed of treaſures. Your army is excellent, your nation docile, loyal, and poſſeſſed of much more public ſpirit than might be expected, in ſo ſlaviſh a conſtitution. Some parts of the adminiſtration of Pruſſia, ſuch as its reſponſibility and conſiſtency, which are purely military, merit great praiſes. One of your uncles, crowned with glory and ſucceſs, poſſeſſes the confidence of Europe, the genius of a hero, and the ſoul of a ſage. He is a counſellor, a coadjutor, a friend, whom nature and deſtiny have ſent you, at the moment when you have moſt need of him, at the time when the more voluntary your deference for him ſhall be, the more infallibly will it acquire you applauſe. You have rivals in power, but not a neighbour who is in reality to be feared. He who ſeemed to proclaim himſelf the moſt formidable has too long threatened to ſtrike (*b*). He has been taught to know you. He has haſtily undertaken, and as haſtily renounced. He will again renounce his new projects. He will require all, will obtain nothing, and will never be any thing more than an irreſolute adventurer, a burthen to himſelf and others.

(*b*) The Emperor Joſeph II. T.

To preſerve yourſelf from his attempts, you need but to ſuffer his contradictory projects to counteract each other.

You, Sire, are the only prince who are under the indiſpenſable neceſſity of performing great things, and from whom great things are expected; and this neceſſity, this expectation, ought to be enumerated among your beſt reſources. —How admirable is your ſituation! How ineſtimable are the advantages you bring to that throne, whereon being ſeated your power is boundleſs!—A power formidable even to the poſſeſſor! But be it remembered that grand inſtitutions, important changes, and the regeneration of empires, appertain only to abſolute monarchs.—Deign, Oh deign, to accept the good that Providence has ſtrewed beneath your feet! Merit the benefactions of the poor, the love of the people, the reſpect of Europe, and the approbation of the wiſe! Be juſt, be good; and you will be happy and great.

Great. This, Sire, is the title you wiſh; but you wiſh it from hiſtory, from futurity: you would diſdain it from the lips of courtiers, whom you *have* heard, and whom you *ſhall* hereafter much oftener hear, prodigal of the groſſeſt praiſe. Should you do that which the ſon of your ſlave could have hourly done better than yourſelf, they will affirm that YOU HAVE PERFORMED AN EXTRAORDINARY ACT. Should you obey your paſſions, they will affirm—YOU HAVE WELL DONE. Should you pour forth the blood of your ſubjects as a river does its waters, they will pronounce—YOU HAVE DONE WELL. Should you tax the free air, they will aſſert—YOU HAVE DONE WELL. Should you, puiſſant as you are, become revengeful, ſtill would they proclaim you had DONE WELL.—So they told the intoxicated Alexander, when he plunged his dagger into the boſom of his friend. Thus they addreſſed Nero, having aſſaſſinated his mother.

But, SIRE, you need only to feel thoſe ſentiments of juſtice which are native to your boſom, and that enlightened conſciouſneſs of benevolence which you poſſeſs;

ſeſs; your own heart will be your judge; and its decrees will be confirmed by your people, by the world, and by poſterity. The eſteem of theſe is indiſpenſable; and how eaſily may their eſteem be obtained! Should you indefatigably perform the duties of the day, and not remit its burthenſome labours till the morrow; ſhould you by grand and prolific principles know how to ſimplify theſe duties, ſo that they may be performed by a ſingle man; ſhould you accord your ſubjects all the liberty they are capable of enjoying; ſhould you protect property, aid induſtry, and root out petty oppreſſors, who, abuſing your name, will not permit men to do that for their own advantage which they might without injury to others; then will the unanimous voice of mankind beſtow bleſſings on your authority, and thus render it more ſacred, and more potent. All things will then become eaſy to you, for every will and every power will unite with your will and your power, and your labours will daily acquire new enjoyments. Nature has rendered labour neceſſary to man; but ſhe has alſo beſtowed on him this precious advantage that the change of labour is, at once, a recreation to him, and a ſource of pleaſure. And who more than a monarch may live according to this order of nature? A philoſopher has ſaid—“ No man was ſo op-“ preſſed by languor as a king.”—He ought to have ſaid A SLOTHFUL KING. How can languor overcome a ſovereign who ſhall perform his duties? How may he better maintain his body in health, or his mind in vigour, than when by labour he preſerves himſelf from that diſguſt which all men of underſtanding muſt feel, amidſt the babblers and the paraſites who ſtudy but to corrupt, lull, benumb, and pilfer princes?—Their whole art is to inſpire him with apathy and debility; or to render him impotent, raſh, and indolent.—Your people will enjoy your virtues; for by theſe only can they proſper, or improve. Your courtiers will applaud your defects; for on theſe depend their influence and their hopes.

Habit, SIRE, no leſs than accident, influences men; and habit is determined by the beginning. Therefore is the commencement of a reign of ſuch value. Every thing is hoped, and the ſlighteſt effort ſeconds and confirms that hope, increaſing it a hundred fold. By the pleaſure of having done, we are ſtrengthened in the love of doing good; and that which is wiſhed is rendered more eaſy by that which has been effected.

The beginning, SIRE, depends abſolutely on yourſelf. Acquire none but good habits; give no encouragement to thoſe that are frivolous. Diſplay the man of order, the lover of the public welfare. You will ſoon be joined by all your miniſters and all your courtiers. Emulation will ſpring forth, and wiſdom will inevitably be the reſult. Emulation will aid you to judge the underſtandings of thoſe by whom you ſhall be approached. It may ſometimes excite or produce a happy project, and you will even turn that propenſity to flattery which cannot totally be expelled from courts to the good of your people.

You may immediately aſcertain to yourſelf that liberty of mind which grand affairs require, by interfering only with ſuch as appertain to the ſovereign authority, and by leaving to your magiſtrates and miniſters all thoſe which naturally ſhould come under their conſideration.

More than one eſtimable monarch has rendered himſelf incapable of reigning with glory, by overburthening his mind with private affairs. As, SIRE, it will become you always to govern well, it will alſo be worthy of you not to govern too much. Wherefore ſhould a king concern himſelf with civil government, which can be better exerciſed without his aid? Authority once eſtabliſhed, external ſafety aſcertained, civil and criminal juſtice adminiſtered alike to all claſſes of citizens, landed property accurately eſtimated ſo as to be judiciouſly aſſeſſed, and public works, roads, and canals wiſely attended to; what more has government to tranſact? It has but to enjoy the induſtry of the people; who, while active for their own intereſt, are alſo acting for the intereſt of the ſtate and the ſovereign.

The king who ſhall examine whether it be not the moſt wiſe not to lay any reſtraint on the general affairs and buſineſs of men, is yet to be born; yet this is the king who would govern like a God; and, by the miniſtry of reaſon, leaving the intereſt of each individual to himſelf, would aſcertain to all the fruits of their induſtry and their knowledge. Where men are moſt free there will they be moſt numerous; and there alſo will they pay the moſt ſubmiſſion, and have the greateſt attachment, to authority: for authority is eſſentially the friend of that freedom which it protects. No man would require more than to be left AT LIBERTY AND IN PEACE.

You ſurely, SIRE, are not to be told that the mania of enacting and reſtraining laws is the characteriſtic of inferior minds; of men incapable of generalizing; who feed on timidity, and ſhake with ridiculous apprehenſions. This important

ant truth will indicate to you the reformation you ought to make; and how much better you will govern than your predeceſſors, and rivals, by governing leſs.

There are doubtleſs a multitude of good, uſeful, neceſſary, and even urgent things, which it will be impoſſible you ſhould immediately execute. You muſt firſt learn them, muſt combine and leave them to ripen. And wherefore ſhould you confide in the opinion of another? This is one of the grand errors of which you ought to be aware, as you ought alſo of being obliged to retract what you have done. The inconſiſtency of that ſovereign, among your rivals, who has attempted the moſt, has been more injurious to the political reſpect in which he might have been held than his worſt errors. Not only therefore muſt you learn what is to do, but, which is more difficult, you muſt perhaps inſtruct your miniſters, and certainly your people. Let perſuaſion precede legiſlation, SIRE; and you will meet no contradiction, and ſcarcely any impediments in thoſe operations which require moments of greater calm, and leſs buſineſs, than are thoſe of the beginning of a reign. But there are things which you may inſtantly execute, and which, by propagating a high opinion of your worth, will acquire the fruits of confidence to your own profit, and facilitate the grand changes with which your reign ought to abound.

Suffer a man who loves you, pardon the freedom for the truth of the expreſſion; ſuffer a man who loves you, for the good you may do and for the grand example you ſhall afford of the evil that may be avoided, to point out a few of thoſe things which a ſingle voluntary act of yours may perform, and which can only be productive of good, without inconvenience, while they ſhall diſplay the morning of the moſt paternal reign which has ever bleſſed mankind.

Among theſe, Sire, and in the firſt rank, I ſhall enumerate the abolition of military ſlavery; that is to ſay the obligation impoſed in your ſtates, on all men, from the age of eighteen to ſixty, and upward if able, to ſerve for threepence a day (*c*). This fearful law, originating in the neceſſities of an iron age and a half barbarous country; this law which depopulates and exhauſts your kingdom, which diſhonours the moſt numerous and the moſt uſeful claſs of your ſubjects, without whom you and your anceſtors would only have been ſlaves more or leſs feathered and painted; this law which is abuſed by your officers, who enrol more men than the military conſcription permits, this law does not procure you a ſoldier more than you would acquire by an increaſe of pay, which might eaſily be made from the additional revenue which you would gain by the juſt ſuppreſſion of thoſe ruinous enliſters, whom Frederic II. maintained in foreign countries; and by a ſage mode of recruiting the Pruſſian army, in a manner that ſhould elevate the mind, increaſe public ſpirit, and pre-

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(*c*) *Un gros tous les cinq jours.* I ſuſpect I have rated the groſchen too high. T.

ſerve the forms of freedom inſtead of thoſe of brutalizing ſlavery.

Throughout Europe, SIRE, and in Pruſſia particularly, men have had the ſtupidity to deprive themſelves of one of the moſt uſeful inſtinctive feelings on which the love of our country can be founded. Men are required to go to war like ſheep to the ſlaughter-houſe; though nothing could be more eaſy than to unite the ſervice of the public with emulation and fame.

Your ſubjects are obliged to ſerve from eighteen to ſixty; and this they with good reaſon ſuppoſe to be the rigorous ſubjection of ſervility. The militia of France is the ſame; and though leſs cruel is hateful to the people. Yet the Swiſs have a ſimilar obligation, which commences at the age of ſixteen, and they believe themſelves to be free men.

In fact, that natural confederacy which induces citizens of the ſame condition to repel the enemy, and to defend their own and their neighbour's inheritance, is ſo manifeſt, and the exerciſe of it is ſo pleaſingly attractive to youth, that it is inconceivable how tyranny could be ſo weak as to render it a burthen.

Impart, SIRE, to this obligation the forms of freedom and of fame, by making it voluntary, and neceſſary in order to merit eſteem; by rendering it a point of honour; and your army will be better conditioned, while your ſubjects ſhall imagine they are, and ſhall really be, relieved from a yoke moſt odious.

Begin by remitting ten years of ſervice: your army then will not be debilitated by age.

Let your peaſants afterward form national companies, in all pariſhes, that ſhall exerciſe every Sunday.

Let ſuch national companies chooſe their own grenadiers; and from theſe let the recruits for your regiments be ſelected; not by your officers, not by the magiſtrates, but by the plurality of votes among their comrades. Arbitrary proceedings would vaniſh, choice would become diſtinction, and the pariſhes reſponſible for the ſoldiers they have ſupplied. Being obliged to fill up their own vacancies when drafts are made the regiments would be always complete, without effort, without tyranny, and without murmur.

Kings who have created power, impatient of enjoyment, have not confided in general principles. They have feared that the people they have invited into their countries ſhould too ſoon be diſguſted, by the difficulties they muſt have to encounter at the beginning. Hence thoſe tyrannical regulations, by the aid of which they have intended to fix the wretch to the ſoil on which he had been planted. In the preſent ſtate of your kingdom, there is no pretext for the continuance of this error. It is time to eradicate ſlavery at which the heart revolts, which drives away good ſubjects, or inſpires them with the deſire of eſcaping. Baniſh therefore all unneceſſary conſtraint; and this, which of all others is the moſt abhorrent and the moſt unneceſſary.

Yet, before deciding on any plan for

the recruiting of the army, it is requiſite to conſider, with all the attention which it merits, that of the moſt worthy of your miniſters, Baron Hertzberg, who to a comprehenſive knowledge of the wounds of Pruſſia, and the means of proſperity and cure, joins the higheſt degree of public ſpirit and patriotic love. He ſuppoſes it poſſible to recruit the army by itſelf, ſo as to provide for every thing that the moſt reſtleſs ſtate of politics can require. Perhaps, and probably, his plan and mine may coaleſce. It is inconteſtably one of thoſe which ought to be executed at the very beginning of your reign; but let it be preceded by a law of enfranchiſement, which ſhall procure your efforts the univerſal ſuffrages of mankind, and their combined aid.

It is not to a man ſo worthy as you, Sire—(and what greater praiſe can be beſtowed upon a King?)—it is not neceſſary to recommend, with reſpect to enrolments, the religious obſervation of all the ſtipulations ſo unworthily violated by your predeceſſors, or the pious rewarding

of

of ſoldiers who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by long and loyal ſervice.—Alas! SIRE, I have ſeen alms beſtowed, under the windows of your palace, upon men who, while you were yet in your cradle, have ſhed their blood in defence of your family. Your generous equity doubtleſs will ſoften the rigour of their deſtiny. Remember alſo the duty, the neceſſity, of educating the children of ſoldiers, who at preſent are periſhing in the moſt deplorable manner, in the orphan-houſe of Potſdam, where more than four thouſand are huddled together. Humanity implores your protection of theſe wretched victims, and provident policy, which but too loudly affirms how requiſite a great army will long be to the Pruſſian ſtates, will point out the real value of theſe children.

Men ought to be happy in your kingdom, SIRE; grant them liberty to leave their country, when not legally detained by individual obligations. Grant this freedom by a formal edict. This, SIRE, is another of the eternal laws of equity; which the ſituation of the times demands ſhould be put in execution; which will do you infinite good, and which will not rob you of one enjoyment; for your people can no where ſeek a better condition than that which it depends on you to afford them; and could they be happy elſewhere they would not be detained by your prohibitions. Leave ſuch laws to thoſe powers that have been deſirous to render provinces priſons, forgetting that this was but to make them hateful. The moſt tyrannical laws reſpecting emigration have only impelled the people to emigrate, againſt the very wiſh of nature, and perhaps the moſt powerful of all wiſhes, which attaches man to his native ſoil. How does the Laplander cheriſh the deſolate climate under which he is born! And would the inhabitant of a kingdom enlightened by milder ſuns pronounce his own baniſhment, did not a tyrannical adminiſtration render the benefits of nature uſeleſs, or abhorred? Far from diſperſing men, a law of enfranchiſement would but detain them in what they would then call their GOOD COUNTRY; and which they would prefer to lands the moſt fertile: for man will ſubmit to every thing that Providence impoſes; he only murmurs at injuſtice from man, to which if he does ſubmit it is with a rebellious heart. Man is not a tree rooted to the earth in which he grows, therefore pertains not to the ſoil. He is neither field, meadow, nor brute; therefore cannot be bought and ſold. He has an interior conviction of theſe ſimple truths; nor can he be perſuaded that his chiefs have any right to attach him to the glebe. All powers in vain unite to inculcate a doctrine ſo infamous. The time when the ſovereign of the earth might conjure him in the name of God, if ſuch a time ever exiſted, is paſt; the language of juſtice and reaſon is the only one to which he will at preſent liſten. Princes cannot too often recollect that Engliſh America enjoins all governments to be juſt and ſage, if governors do not wiſh to rule over deſerts. [illegible]ecenor,

Aboliſh, Sire, the *traites fo*[illegible]ators.

(*d*) The twentieth, levied on all merchandiſe entering or leaving the kingdom. T.

and the *droits d'aubaine (e).* Of what benefit to you can ſuch remains of feudal barbariſm be? Do not wait for a ſyſtem of reciprocity, which never has any other effect than that of longer detaining nations in a ſtate of folly and warfare. That which is good for the proſperity of any country needs no reciprocity. Objections of this kind are but the fooliſh objections of vanity. Should the tyranny which is exerciſed over man and property in one ſtate be to the loſs of another, this is an additional reaſon why the latter ſhould put an end to ſuch abſurd cuſtoms. Similar abſurdities perhaps have obliged its own ſubjects to ſeek their fortune elſewhere, and have even made them forbear to return and bring the fruits of their labours back to the country that gave them birth. As nothing is wanting but that ſome one ſhould begin, how noble, how worthy is it of a great king [illegible] be th[illegible] firſt! Your commercial ſubjects here, tranſl. ſomewhat wealthy could not ac-
meant

(e, The ſeizure of the effects of foreigners, who happen to die in the kingdom. T.

quire their wealth at home, they were obliged to ſeek it in foreign countries; who therefore, SIRE, is more intereſted than you are to ſet the example of abolition, where to exact is ſo atrocious? Have England and Holland waited to renounce ſuch rights, till you ſhould have renounced them in their behalf?

One of the moſt urgent changes which demands your attention, and which a word may accompliſh, is a law to reſtore to the plebeians the liberty to purchaſe patrician lands, with all their annexed rights. The execution of the ſtrange decree by which they were deprived of this liberty has been ſo iniquitouſly inflicted that, if a patrician eſtate was ſold for debt, and a plebeian was deſirous of paying all the creditors, with an additional ſum to the debtor, he was not allowed ſo to do, without an expreſs order from the King. This order was generally refuſed by your predeceſſor, and the patrician by whom the creditors were defrauded, and the debtor kept without reſource, had the preference.

What was the conſequence of this abſurd law? The debaſement of the price of land, that is to ſay of the firſt riches of the ſtate, and highly to the diſadvantage of the noble landholders; the decay of agriculture, which was before diſcouraged by ſo many other cauſes, and of credit among the gentry; the aggravation of that fearful prejudice which wrongs the plebeian and renders the patrician ſtupid, by making him ſuppoſe his honourable rights are a ſufficient ſource of reſpect, and that he need not acquire any other; in fine the abſolute neceſſity that thoſe plebeians ſhould quit the country who had acquired any capital; for they could not employ their money in trade, that being ruined by monopoly; nor in agriculture, becauſe they were not allowed to hope they ever might be landholders (*f*). Is not Mecklenburg full of the

traders

(*f*) *Bourgeoiſie* and *Roturiers* are terms which are here tranſlated by the word plebeian, and this word is meant to include all claſſes, whether of tradeſmen, huſbandmen, or liberal profeſſions, that do not appertain to the nobility. T.

traders of Stettin, and Kœnigſberg, &c. who have employed the wealth they gained, during the laſt maritime war, in the purchaſe of the eſtates of the ruined nobility of that country? This, SIRE, would be a heavy loſs to you, were Mecklenburg always to be ſeparated from your kingdom; a loſs beyond the powers of calculation, were the ſame regulations hereafter to ſubſiſt. It is a remark which could not eſcape ſagacious travellers, that wealthy merchants have delighted, in retirement, to betake themſelves to agriculture. The moſt barren land becomes fruitful in their poſſeſſion. They labour for its improvement, and bear with them that ſpirit of order, that circumſtantial preciſion, by which they grew rich in trade. Wherever merchants can purchaſe, and wherever trade is honourable, there the country flouriſhes, and wears the face of abundance and proſperity. Commercial induſtry awakens every other kind of induſtry, and the earth requires that ingenious tillage which animates vegetation in the moſt ungrateful ſoil.

Ah! SIRE, deign to recollect this tillage never was invented on patrician lands; for this we are indebted to thoſe countries where illuſtrious birth vaniſhes, when merit and talents appear.

Aboliſh, SIRE, thoſe ſenſeleſs prerogatives, which beſtow great offices on men who, to ſpeak mildly, are not above mediocrity; and which are the cauſe that the greateſt number of your ſubjects take no intereſt in a country where they have nothing to hope but fetters and humiliations. Beware, Oh! Beware, of that univerſal ariſtocracy which is the ſcourge of monarchical ſtates, even more than of republics; an ariſtocracy by which, from one end of the earth to the other, the human ſpecies is oppreſſed. It is the intereſt of the moſt abſolute monarch to promulgate the moſt popular maxims. The people do not dread and revile kings, but their miniſters, their courtiers, their nobles; in a word the ariſtocracy. OH DID THE KING BUT KNOW!" —Thus they exclaim.—They daily invoke the royal authority, and are always ready to arm it againſt ariſtocracy. And whence is the power of the prince derived, but from the people; his perſonal ſafety, but from the people; his wealth and ſplendor, but from the people; thoſe benedictions which alone can make him more than mortal, but from the people? And who are the enemies of the ſovereign, but the grandees; the members of the ariſtocracy, who require the king ſhould be only THE FIRST AMONG EQUALS, and who, wherever they could, have left him no other pre-eminence than that of rank, reſerving power to themſelves? By what ſtrange error does it happen that kings debaſe their friends, whom they deliver up to their enemies? It is the intereſt and the will of the people that the prince ſhould never be deceived. The intereſt and the will of the nobility are the very reverſe. The people are eaſily ſatisfied: they give and aſk not. Only prevent indolent pride from bearing too heavy upon them; leave but the career open which the ſupreme Being has pointed out to them at their birth, and they will not murmur. Where is the monarch who could ever ſatisfy the noble, the rich, the great? Do they ever ceaſe to aſk? Will they ever ceaſe?

Sire, equality of rights among thoſe who ſupport the throne will form its firmeſt baſis. Changes of this kind cannot be ſuddenly made; yet there is one of theſe which cannot be too ſuddenly: let no perſon who wiſhes to approach the throne, whatever may be his rank in life, be impeded by the prerogatives of the great. Let men feel the neceſſity of equal merit to obtain preference. It is for you to level diſtinctions, and ſeat merit in its proper place.

Declare open war on the prejudice which places ſo great a diſtance between military and civil functions. It is a prejudice which, under a feeble prince, ſuch as your auguſt family, like every other, may ſome time produce, will expoſe the country, and the crown itſelf, to all the convulſions of pretorian anarchy. The officer, and the ſoldier, Sire, ſhould only be proud in the preſence of the foe. To their countrymen they ſhould be brothers: and, if they defend their fellow citizens, be it remembered they are paid by their fellow citizens. In a kingdom like yours, perhaps, the warrior ought to have the firſt degree of reſpect; but he ought not to have it excluſively. If you have an army only you will never have a kingdom. Render your civil officers more reſpectable than they were under your predeceſſor. Nothing is more juſt, or more eaſy to accompliſh. The prince who reigns over the affections engages them by the ſimpleſt attentions. Frederic II. had the frenzy of continually wearing a uniform, as if he were the king only of ſoldiers. This legionary habiliment did not a little contribute to diſcredit the civil officer. How happened it he never felt it was impoſſible a ſovereign ſhould render men eſtimable for whom he never would teſtify eſteem? He who attempts to make thoſe incorruptible to whom he will not aſcertain pecuniary independence will be equally unſucceſsful. Let the civil officer be better paid; and never forget, SIRE, that ill-pay is ill-œconomy. Among a thouſand examples, I will but cite the enormous frauds that the Pruſſian adminiſtrators have, for ſome years, committed on the public revenue. By an inconſiſtency, which is important in its effects, the financiers have been held in too much contempt, and thoſe who have been convicted of acts the moſt diſhoneſt have been too ſlightly puniſhed. Such partiality could only raiſe the indignation of the poor, and encourage the fraudulent; who ſoon learned that to bribe an accomplice was to diminiſh the danger.

Prompt and gratuitous juſtice is evidently the firſt of ſovereign duties. If the judge have no intereſt to elude the law, and can receive only his ſalary, gratuitous juſtice is ſoon rendered; and will be equitable, ſhould your inſpection be active and ſevere, and ſhould you never forget that ſeverity is the firſt duty of kings. This grand regulation of rendering juſtice entirely gratuitous will, fortunately, not become burthenſome in your ſtates; for your people are well inclined, and not addicted to litigious diſputes. But, burthenſome or not, that which is ſtrict equity is always neceſſary. Juſtice, SIRE, precedes utility itſelf; or rather where juſtice is not there is there no utility. The judge ought to be paid by the public, and not to receive fees. To deny this were abſurd; for muſt not judges ſubſiſt, though there ſhould not, for a whole year, be a ſingle law-ſuit?

Be you, SIRE, the firſt to render the adminiſtration of juſtice gratuitous.

Be you alſo the firſt in whoſe ſtates all men, who wiſh to labour, ſhall find work. All who breathe ought to feed by labour. It is the firſt law of nature, and prior to all human conventions. It is the bond of ſociety. The government that ſhould neglect to multiply the products of the earth, and that ſhould not leave to each individual the uſe and profits of his induſtry, would be the accomplice or the author of all the crimes of men, and never could puniſh a culprit without committing a murder; for each man, who offers labour in exchange for food, and meets refuſal, is the natural and legitimate enemy of other men, and has a right to make war upon ſociety.

Every where, in country as well as in town, let houſes of induſtry be kept open at the expence of government; that any man, of any country, may there gain his livelihood by his labour; and that your ſubjects there may be taught the value of time and induſtry.

Such inſtitutions, SIRE, would be no burthen; they would pay themſelves. They would open a road to trade, facilitate the ſale of natural products, enrich your lands, and improve your finances.

Such, SIRE, are the inſtitutions which become a great king; and not manufactures protected by excluſive privileges, which only can be ſupported by injuſtice and mountains of gold, and which do but contribute to enrich a very ſmall number of men; or to endow hoſpitals, which, if there were no poor, would create paupers.

There are, alas! too many poor in

Pruſſia, eſpecially at Berlin, and the poverty of whom demands your attention. In your capital, it cannot be ſaid without a painful emotion, a tenth of the inhabitants receives public alms; and this number annually augments. It is no doubt neceſſary to limit the extent of cities, where exceſſive population is productive of the worſt conſequences. In them not only poverty takes birth but the worſt of poverty, becauſe it is not known how it may be remedied. The poor of cities are beings that have loſt all good properties, moral and phyſical. But, ſpeaking in general, the beſt opponent to this increaſing poverty would be the houſes of induſtry before mentioned, where all men who have arms may labour; and not thoſe uſeleſs trades, which are wretched in their pomp, and ſerve but to encourage the luxury of ſplendor, which already eats up your kingdom; nor thoſe hoſpitals, fruitful ſources of depredation, of benefit only to their directors, which ingulph ſums ſo conſiderable; while your ſchools, eſpecially thoſe of the open country, are ſo neglected, and ſo miſerable, that the ſalaries of ſome of the head maſters ſcarcely amount to fifteen crowns a year. Let your Majeſty fit your ſubjects for labour by a proper mode of inſtruction, and they will have no need of hoſpitals.

You are not ignorant, SIRE, that to inſtruct is one of the moſt important duties of the ſovereign, as it is one of his greateſt ſources of wealth. The moſt able man could do nothing without forming thoſe who ſurround him, and whom he is obliged to employ; nor without teaching them his language, and familiarizing them with his ideas and his principles. The entire freedom of the preſs therefore ought to be enumerated among your firſt regulations; not only becauſe the deprivation of this freedom is a deprivation of natural right, but becauſe that all impediment to the progreſs of the human underſtanding is an evil, an exceſſive evil; and eſpecially to yourſelf, who only can enjoy truth, and hear truth, from the preſs, which ſhould be the prime miniſter of good kings.

They will tell you, SIRE, that with reſpect to the freedom of the preſs you can add nothing at Berlin. But to aboliſh the cenſorſhip, of itſelf ſo uſeleſs, and always ſo arbitrary, would be much. If the printer's name be inſerted in the title page, it is enough, perhaps more than enough. The only ſpecious objection againſt an unlimited freedom of the preſs is the licentiouſneſs of libels; but it is not perceived that the freedom of the preſs would take away the danger; becauſe that, under ſuch a regulation, truth only would remain. The moſt ſcandalous libels have no power except in countries that are deprived of the freedom of the preſs. Its reſtrictions form an illicit trade, which cannot be extirpated; yet they lay reſtraints on none but honeſt people. Let not, therefore, that abſurd contraſt be ſeen in Pruſſia, which abſolutely forbids foreign books to be inſpected, and ſubjects national publications to ſo ſevere an inquiſition. Give freedom to all. Read, SIRE, Sɪʀᴇ, and ſuffer others to read. Knowledge will every where expand, and will centre on the throne. Do you wiſh for darkneſs? Oh! no! Your mind is too great. Or, if you did, you would wiſh in vain, would act to your own injury, without obtaining the fatal ſucceſs of extinguiſhing light. You will read, Sɪʀᴇ; you will begin a noble aſſociation with books; books that have deſtroyed ſhameful and cruel prejudices; that have ſmoothed your paths; that were beneficial to you previous even to your birth You will not be ungrateful toward the accumulated labours of beneficent genius. You will read; you will protect thoſe who write; for without them what were, what ſhould be, the human ſpecies? They will inſtruct, will aid you, will ſpeak to you unſeen, without approaching your throne; will introduce auguſt Truth to your preſence, who ſhall enter your palace uneſcorted, unattended; and, having entered, ſhe will aſk no dignities, no titles, but will remain inviſible and diſintereſted. You will read; but you would wiſh your people ſhould read alſo. You will not think you have done enough by filling your academies with foreigners. You will found ſchools, eſpecially in the country, and will multiply and endow them. You will not wiſh to reign in darkneſs. Say but, "Let there "be light," and light ſhall appear at your bidding; while her divine beams ſhall ſhine more reſplendent round your head than all the laurels of heroes and conquerors.

There is a devouring plague in your ſtates, SIRE, which you cannot too ſuddenly extirpate; and no doubt this good deed will nobly ſignalize the firſt day of your acceſſion to the throne. I ſpeak of the lottery, which would but be the more odious and more formidable did it procure you the wealth of worlds; but which, for the wretched gain of fifty thouſand crowns, hurries the induſtrious part of your ſubjects into all the calamities of poverty and vice.

You will be told, SIRE, what ſome pretended ſtateſmen have not bluſhed to write, and publiſh, that the lottery ought to be regarded as a voluntary tax.—A tax?—And what a tax! One whoſe whole products are founded either on delirium or deſpair. What a tax! To which the rich landholder is not obliged to contribute. A tax which neither wiſe nor good men ever pay.—A voluntary tax?—Strange indeed is this kind of freedom! Each day, each minute, the people are told it depends only on themſelves to become rich for a trifle: thouſands may be gained by a ſhilling. So the wretch believes who cannot calculate, and who is in want of bread; and the ſacrifice he makes of that poor remaining ſhilling which was to purchaſe bread, and appeaſe the cries of his family, is a free gift! A tax, which he pays to his ſovereign!

You will be further told, yes, men will dare to tell you, that this horrible invention, which empoiſons even hope itſelf, the laſt of the comforts of man, is indeed an evil; but that it were better you ſhould yourſelf collect the harveſt of the lottery than abandon your ſubjects to foreign lotteries.—Oh! SIRE, caſt arithmetic ſo corrupt, and ſophiſms ſo deteſtable, with horror from you. There continually are means of oppoſing foreign lotteries. Secret collectors are not to be feared. They will not penetrate far into your ſtates, when the pains and penalties are made ſevere; and in ſuch inſtances only are informers encouraged without inconvenience, for they only inform againſt an ambulatory peſtilence. The natural penalties againſt ſuch as favour adventurers in foreign lotteries are, infamy, an excluſion from municipal offices, from trading companies, and from the right of coming on change. Theſe penalties are very ſevere, and no doubt ſufficient; yet if violent remedies are neceſſary, to impede the progreſs of ſuch a crime, the puniſhment of death, that puniſhment at which my mind revolts and my blood is frozen, that puniſhment ſo prodigally beſtowed on ſo many crimes, and which perhaps no crime can merit, would be rendered more excuſable from the fearful liſt of wretchedneſs and diſorder, which originate in lotteries, than even from the moſt exaggerated conſequences of domeſtic theft.

But, SIRE, the great, firſt, and immediate operation which I ſupplicate from YOUR MAJESTY, in the name of your deareſt intereſt and glory, is a quick and formal declaration, accompanied with all the awful characteriſtics of ſovereignty, that unlimited toleration ſhall prevail through your ſtates, and that they ſhall ever remain open to all religions. You have a very natural, and not leſs eſtimable, opportunity of making ſuch a declaration. Publiſh an edict which ſhall grant civil liberty to the Jews. This act of beneficence, at the very commencement of your reign, will make you ſurpaſs your illuſtrious predeceſſor in religious toleration, who was the moſt tolerant prince that ever exiſted. Nor ſhall this exceſs of beneficence be without its reward. Excluſive of the numerous increaſe to population, and the large capitals which Pruſſia will infallibly acquire, at the expence of other countries, the Jews of the ſecond generation will become good and uſeful citizens. To effect this they need but be encouraged in the mechanic arts, and agriculture, which to them are interdicted. Free them from thoſe additional taxes by which they are oppreſſed. Give them acceſs to the courts of juſtice equal to your other ſubjects, by depriving their Rabbis of all civil authority.—Oh! SIRE, I conjure you, beware of delaying the declaration of the moſt univerſal tolerance. There are fears in your provinces of rather loſing than gaining in this reſpect. Apprehenſions are entertained concerning what are called your prejudices, your preconceived opinions, your doctrine. This perhaps is the only part in which you have been ſeriouſly attacked by calumny. Solemnly prove the falſehood of thoſe who have affirmed you are intolerant. Shew them that your reſpect for religious opinions equals your reſpect for the great Creator, and that you are far from deſiring to preſcribe laws concerning the manner in which he ought to be adored. Prove that, be your philoſophic or religious opinions what they may, you make no pretenſions to the abſurd and tyrannical right of impoſing opinions upon others.

After theſe preliminary acts, which, I cannot too often repeat, may as well be performed in an hour as in a year, and which conſequently ought to be performed immediately, a glance on the œconomical and political ſyſtem, by which your kingdom is regulated, will lead you to other conſiderations.

It is a moſt remarkable thing that a man like your predeceſſor, diſtinguiſhed for the extreme juſtneſs of his underſtanding, ſhould have embraced an œconomical and political ſyſtem ſo radically vicious.—Indirect taxes, extravagant prohibitions, regulations of every kind, excluſive privileges, monopolies without number!—Such was the ſpirit of his domeſtic government, and to a degree that, beſide being odious, was moſt ridiculous.

Is it not aſtoniſhing, for example,

that a man like Frederic II. could waſte his time in regulating, in ſuch a city as Berlin, the rates that ſhould be paid at inns; the pay of *laquais de louage* (g); and the value of all the neceſſaries of life; or that ever he ſhould conceive the project of prohibiting the entrance of French apples into the march of Brandenburg, which is only productive of woods and ſands? As if the apples of his provinces were in dread of rivals. Thus too he aſked, when he prohibited the eggs that were brought from Saxony,—"Cannot my hens lay eggs?"—Could he forget that the eggs of the hens of Berlin muſt firſt be eaten, before the inhabitants would ſend as far as Dreſden for others? His prohibition too of the mouſe-traps of Brunſwic! As if the man had ever before been born who founded his hopes of fortune on a ſpeculation in mouſe-traps! It would be endleſs to collect all his ſingularities of this kind. Who can reflect, without pain and pity, that four hundred and twelve monopolies exiſt in your kingdom? So interwoven was this equally abſurd and iniquitous ſyſtem, with the ſpirit of the government of Frederic. II! Or that a great number of theſe monopolies are ſtill active; at leaſt that the prohibitive ordinances are effective, which beſtowed ſuch excluſive privileges on perſons many of whom have ſince been ruined, and have become bankrupts or outlaws? Or that, in fine, the number of prohibited commodities greatly exceeds that of commodities that are permitted? Theſe things would appear incredible to men even moſt accuſtomed to indulge the regulatory and fiſcal delirium! Yet thus low could even a great man ſink, who was deſirous of governing too much.

(g) Footmen that are hired by the day, for the convenience of ſtrangers. T.

Is it not equally aſtoniſhing that a monarch ſo active, ſo induſtrious, in his royal functions, ſhould leave the ſyſtem of direct taxation exactly in the ſtate in which it was under Frederic I. when the clergy were taxed at a fiftieth of their income, the nobility at the thirty-third, and the people at the ſeventeenth; a burthen at that time exceſſive, but which, by the different variations in value and the ſigns of property, is almoſt reduced to nothing? So that induſtry and trade have been moſt unmercifully oppreſſed by your predeceſſor, at the very time that he was eſtabliſhing manufactures at an exceſſive expence.

How might this ſame king, ſo conſiſtent and pertinacious in what he had once ordained, at the time that he ſettled new colonies by granting them franchiſes and the right of property, the neceſſity of which to agriculture he conſequently knew, ſuffer the abſurd regulation to ſubſiſt which excludes all right of property in the greateſt part of his kingdom? How was it that he did not feel that, inſtead of expending ſums ſo vaſt in forming colonies, he would much more rapidly have augmented his revenues, and the population of his provinces, by enfranchiſing thoſe unfortunate beaſts of burthen who, under the human form, cultivate the earth, by diſtributing among them the extenſive tracts called domains (which abſorb almoſt the half of your eſtates)

eſtates) in proprietaries, and on condition of paying certain hereditary quit-rents in kind?

All theſe particulars, and a thouſand others of a like kind, are ſtrange, no doubt; yet it is not totally impoſſible to explain ſuch eccentricities of mind in a great man. Without entering here into a particular enquiry, concerning that quality of mind whence it reſulted that Frederic II. was much rather a ſingular example of the developement of great character, in its proper place, than of an elevated genius, beſtowed by nature, and ſuperior to other men, it is eaſy to perceive that, having applied the whole power of his abilities to form a grand military force, with provinces that were diſunited, parcelled out, and generally unfruitful; apu, for that purpoſe, wiſhing to outſtrip the ſlow march of nature, he principally thought of money, becauſe money was the only engine of ſpeed. Hence originated with him his idolatry of money; his love of amaſſing, realizing, and heaping. Thoſe fiſcal ſyſtems which moſt effectually ſtripped the people of their metal were thoſe in which he moſt delighted. Every artifice, every fiſcal extortion, that have taken birth in kingdoms the moſt luxurious, which unfortunately, in this as in other things, gave the faſhion to Europe, were by turns naturalized in his ſtates. Frederic II. was the more eaſily led to purſue this purpoſe, becauſe ſuch was the ſituation of ſome of his provinces that they were almoſt neceſſarily a market for the products of Saxony, Poland, &c. and thus the multiplicity and ſeverity of his duties were leſs rapidly deſtructive of the revenue ariſing from the tolls. Beſide that his nation, but little active, and ſtill perhaps tainted by that Germanic improvidence which neglects or diſdains to ſave, did not afford him any other immediate reſource than what might be found in the royal treaſury. He imagined the Pruſſians were in need of being goaded by additions, which however could only tend to ſlacken their pace. He ſuppoſed they might be taught wiſdom by monopolies; as if monopolies were not injurious to the progreſs of knowledge. Having taken his firſt ſteps, his unconquerable ſpirit of conſiſtency, which was his diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic; the multitude of his affairs, which obliged him to leave whatever did not appertain to the military ſyſtem on the ſame baſis, and with ſimilar inſtitutions in which he found it; his habit of not ſuffering contradiction nor diſcuſſion; his extreme contempt for mankind, which perhaps will explain all his ſucceſs, all his errors, all his conduct; his confidence in his own ſuperiority, which confirmed him in the fatal reſolution of ſeeing all, of all regulating, all ordaining, and perſonally interfering in all; theſe various cauſes combined have rendered fiſcal robbery, and ſyſtematic monopoly, irrefragable and ſacred in his kingdom; while they were daily aggravated by his deſpotic temper, and the moroſeneſs of age.

Evils ſo various and ſo great had indeed ſome compenſations. To his numerous taxes Frederic II. joined a rigorous œconomy. He raiſed heavy contributions on his enemies. His firſt wars were paid by their money. He conquered a rich province, where great and wealthy induſtry, produced no doubt by a government more ſage than his, had previouſly been eſtabliſhed. He drew ſubſidies from his allies; the folly of granting which is no longer in faſhion. During four and twenty years of peace, he enjoyed a degree of reſpect, which rather reſembled worſhip than dread. He continually reſerved, in his ſtates, ſome part of the money he extorted. His new military diſcipline, a ſpecies of induſtry of which he was the creator, not a little contributed to his puiſſance; and his wealth, in the midſt of indebted Europe, would have been almoſt ſufficient for all his wiſhes; for, had the ardour of his ambition longer continued, what he could not have conquered he would have bought. Who indeed can ſay whether Frederic II. was no indebted, for a great part of his domeſtic ſucceſs, to the deplorable ſtate of the human ſpecies in Germany;

through moſt of the ſtates of which, if we except Saxony, the inhabitants were ſtill more wretched than in Pruſſia?

Yet, SIRE, with efforts ſo multiplied, what is the inheritance that has been left you by this great king? Are your provinces rich, powerful, and happy? Deprive them of their military renown, and the reſources of the royal treaſury, which ſoon may vaniſh, and feeble will be the remainder. Had the provinces of which your kingdom is compoſed been under a paternal government, and peopled by freemen, the acquiſition of Sileſia might have been more diſtant; but how different would have been the preſent ſtate and wealth of the whole remaining nation!

Your ſituation, SIRE, is intirely different from that of your predeceſſor. The deſtructive reſources of fiſcal regulation are exhauſted. A change of ſyſtem is for this reaſon indiſpenſable. An army cannot always, cannot long, conſtitute the baſis of the Pruſſian puiſſance. Your army muſt therefore be ſupported by all the internal aids which good adminiſtration can employ, built on permanent foundations. It is neceſſary that you ſhould truly animate the national induſtry, in ably profiting by thoſe extraordinary and periſhable means which have been tranſmitted to you by your predeceſſor. Theſe it is to be preſumed you may long enjoy. It is not therefore abſurd to adviſe you to ſow, in order that you may reap. Should momentary ſacrifices, however great, be neceſſary, to render the Pruſſian ſtates (which hitherto have only conſtituted a vaſt and formidable camp) a ſtable and proſperous monarchy, founded on freedom and property, the immenſity of your treaſure will render ſuch ſacrifices infinitely leſs burthenſome to you than they would be to any other ſovereign, and the barter will be prodigiouſly to your advantage, even ſhould the rendering of men happy be eſtimated at nothing.

The baſis of the ſyſtem which it is your duty, SIRE, to form muſt reſt on the juſt ideas which you ſhall obtain of the true value of money, which is but a trifling part of national wealth, and of much leſs importance than the riches which annually ſpring from the boſom of the earth. The incorruptibility and the ſcarcity of gold have rendered it a pledge, and a mode of exchange, between man and man; and this general uſe is the chief ſource of the deceitful opinions that are entertained of its value. The facility with which it may be removed, when men are obliged to fly, eſpecially from places where tyranny is to be dreaded, has given every individual a deſire of amaſſing gold; and the falſe opinions concerning that metal have been ſtrengthened by this univerſal deſire.

No leſs true is it that gold, being an engine or agent in trade, and that the multiplicity of agents is the increaſe of trade (*h*), and ſtill further that the increaſe of trade is the proſperity of na-

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(*h*) The whole reaſoning here, and indeed through the greateſt part of the Memoir, is taken from that almoſt ineſtimably valuable work, SMITH'S WEALTH OF NATIONS. T.

tions, to impriſon gold, or to act ſo as to oblige others to impriſon it, is madneſs. What would you ſay of a prince who, deſiring to become a conqueror, ſhould keep his army ſhut up in barracks? Yet kings who amaſs gold act preciſely thus. They render that lifeleſs which is of no value, except when in motion.

But juſt ideas concerning the value of gold are neceſſarily connected with thoſe of the government that ſhall reſpect property, and ſhall purſue principles of rigorous juſtice; ſuch as ſhall inſpire unſhaken confidence, and render to each individual the moſt perfect ſecurity; for without this the true uſe of gold is traverſed by innumerable accidents, that deprive it of the utility which would otherwiſe render national induſtry ſo fruitful.

Whatever you may do, Sire, to inſpire confidence, it ſtill remains for you to obſerve that nations have commercial connections and that gold forms one of thoſe, becauſe of its neceſſity to trade. It muſt flow here or there, according to the indefinite combinations of merchants. Hence no nation can unite ſound opinions concerning trade with reſtraint on the exportation of gold. Each man muſt finally pay his debts, and no perſon gives or receives gold, from which little is to be gained, except when every means of paying in merchandize is exhauſted; for from theſe profits are derived to buyer and ſeller. What would you think, SIRE, of a prince who ſhould encourage the merchants of his kingdom to eſtabliſh numerous manufactures, conſequently to employ numerous agents, yet ſhould forbid thoſe agents to leave the kingdom that they might purchaſe the materials of which the manufacturers ſtand in need? This however is the picture of the prince who ſhould prevent, or lay reſtraint on, the exportation of gold: ſuch would his phrenzy be. But in what does this phrenzy originate? In his fear that the gold will never come back. And wherefore? Becauſe he ſecretly feels that his ſubjects are not perfectly ſecure of their property.—Thus, SIRE, you perceive juſtice, ſecurity, reſpect for men, and a declaration of war againſt all tyranny, are indiſpenſable conditions to every plan of proſperity.

When your ſubjects ſhall be at eaſe in this reſpect, entertain no apprehenſions ſhould gold ſeem to vaniſh: it is but gone in ſearch of gold, and to return with increaſe. Forget not, SIRE, that the value of gold is loſt, irretrievably, when it is not abſolutely ſubjected to the will of trade, which alone is its monarch. By trade I here underſtand the general action of all productive induſtry, from the huſbandman to the artiſt.

What has been done in kingdoms where the ſecurity of the citizen is perfect, and where men have been convinced that gold never can be fixed, nor acquired in ſufficient abundance for the ſupply of exchange? Why, in ſuch kingdoms, banks have been imagined, and bills have been brought into circulation, which, from the conviction that they may at any time be turned into ſpecie, have become a kind of coin, which not being univerſal has been an internal ſubſtitute for gold, and induced men not to diſturb themſelves concerning its external circulation.

Of ſuch eſtabliſhments you, SIRE, ſhould be ambitious. Happy the ſtate in which the ſovereign, having habituated his ſubjects to the opinion of perfect internal ſecurity, can cauſe ſufficient ſums to iſſue from his treaſury for the eſtabliſhment of ſuch banks, to his own advantage (*i*). How many fiſcal inventions, produced by the ſpirit of pilfering, under the protection of ignorance and the laws, how many abſurd and tyrannical taxes might be annihilated, by gaining the intereſt of that money of which this confidential currency ſhould be the repreſentative! And what tax ever could

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(*i*) Notwithſtanding the general excellence of the counſel given in this Memorial, there ſeems to be a mixture of cunning in the preſent advice, of which perhaps the Author was not conſcious. But the preceding letters prove that he himſelf was addicted to ſpeculations in ſtock-jobbing; and, ſtill more, that he wiſhed to procure loans from Pruſſia to ſupply the immediate neceſſities of France, and of his friend de Calonne. The advice however might be, and probably was, good. T.

be more mild, more natural, more productive, or more agreeable to the monarch, than the intereſt of money which he may gain by a currency which coſts him nothing? Such a tax is cheerfully paid, for induſtry is the borrower; and, wherever induſtry finds it's reward, each individual wiſhes to be induſtrious.

The outline I have here traced, and which you, Sire, may ſtrengthen by ſo many circumſtances of which I am ignorant, and by ſo many others that would be too tedious to recapitulate at preſent, will naturally lead you—

I. To the diſtribution of your immenſe domains among huſbandmen, whom you will ſupply with the ſums they want, and who will become real landholders, that ſhall pay a perpetual quit-rent in kind, in order that your revenues may augment in proportion to the augmentation of wealth.

II. To the due lowering (till ſuch time as they may be wholly aboliſhed) of indirect taxes, exciſe duties, cuſtoms, &c. the product of which will continually increaſe in an inverſe ratio to the quantity of the duty, and the vigour with which it is collected; for illicit trade, excited by too tempting lures, gains protectors among thoſe by whom it ought to be repreſſed, and agents who had been appointed its opponents. Such diſaſtrous taxes might likewiſe find ſubſtitutes in the natural and juſt increaſe of direct taxes; as on land, from which no eſtate ought to be free; for land finally bears the whole burthen of taxation, which burthen is the heavier the more the means of laying it on are indirect. How many diſputes, ſhackles, inquiſitions, and diſorders, would then vaniſh! Plagues which are more odious, more oppreſſive, than the burthen of the tax itſelf; and even more intolerable from the mode of aſſeſſment than from the value! That artificial vice which before the laſt reign was unknown in your kingdom, the vice of illicit trade, which makes deceit the baſis of commerce, depraves the manners, and inſpires a general contempt for the laws, then would diſappear. To the regions of hell itſelf would then be baniſhed the infernal power which your predeceſſor conferred on the adminiſtrators of exciſe duties and tolls, of arbitrarily increaſing the penalties and puniſhments inflicted on ſmugglers.

III. You will firmly and invariably determine on the ſyſtem of favouring, by every poſſible means, the *tranſit trade* (*k*), which muſt find new roads ſhould foreigners longer be vexed; or rather has already found new roads. The impoſitions, and minute examinations, which are occaſioned by the manner of levying duties on this trade, and the fatal vigilance that has been employed not to ſuffer contraband goods to find entrance at the fair of Frankfort on the Oder, has produced this fatal effect that the Poles, who formerly carried on a very conſiderable trade at Frankfort, and at Breſlau, at preſent totally avoid both places, and condemn themſelves to a circuit of near a

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(*k*) The paſſage of foreign goods through the Pruſſian ſtates into other countries. T.

hundred German miles (*l*) through a great part of Poland, Moravia, and Bohemia, that they may arrive at Leipſic; for which reaſon this laſt city, which is much leſs favourably ſituated than Frankfort on the Oder, where there is a great river, has within theſe fifteen years become flouriſhing; while the former, from the ſame cauſe, has fallen to decay: which decay continues increaſing, and that at the very moment when the revolution in America threatens the North with ſo powerful a rivalſhip. Profit, Sire, by the laſt ſtage in which perhaps the tranſit trade can be an object of any importance. Favour it by taking off the chief of the duties which ſhackle it at preſent, and impart a confidence befitting of your candour and generous benevolence. How might you find a more fortunate moment in which to manifeſt ſuch intentions, than that wherein your neigh-

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(*l*) The German mile is irregular. It contains from four to five, ſix, ſeven, and even more miles Engliſh. T.

bours are ſignalizing themſelves by ſo many prohibitive phrenzies?

IV. To you, SIRE, is reſerved the real and ſingular honour of aboliſhing monopolies, which are no leſs injurious to good ſenſe than to equity; and which in your kingdom are ſo perpetual a ſource of hatred and malediction. The Pruſſian merchants, incited by the example of monopolizing companies (Nature, deſirous of preſerving the human race, ever cauſes evil itſelf to produce good), and, thanks to the excellent ſituation of your ſtates, have made ſome progreſs, in deſpite of every effort to ſtifle their induſtry, on the firſt ray of hope that monopolies ſhould diſappear; and theſe merchants will, by voluntary contributions, afford a ſubſtitute for a part of the deficiency which the new ſyſtem may at firſt occaſion, in your revenues.

V. You will finally arrive at the greateſt of benefits, and at the moſt uſeful of ſpeculations in politics and finance. You will ſet induſtry, arts, manufactures, and commerce, free; commerce, which only can exiſt under the protection of freedom; commerce, which prefers no requeſt to kings except not to do it an injury. When you ſhall ſeriouſly have examined whether thoſe manufactures, which never can ſupport a foreign rivalſhip, deſerve to be encouraged at an expence ſo heavy, prohibitions will then preſently vaniſh from your ſtates. The linens of Sileſia never were otherwiſe favoured than by exempting the weavers from military enrolment; and of all the objects of Pruſſian trade, theſe linens are the moſt important. In none of your provinces are any manufactures to be found more flouriſhing than in that of Weſtphalia; namely, in the county of Marck; yet never has government done any thing to encourage the induſtry of this province, except in not inflicting internal vexations. I repeat, internal, for all the products of the induſtry of Pruſſian ſubjects, beyond the Weſer, are accounted foreign and contraband, in all the other provinces; which odious and abſurd iniquity you will not ſuffer to ſubſiſt. You will enfranchiſe all, SIRE, and will grant no more excluſive privileges. Thoſe who demand them are generally either knaves or fools; and to acquieſce in their requeſts is the ſureſt method of ſtrangling induſtry. If ſuch are found in England, it is becauſe the form in which they are granted renders them almoſt null. In Ireland they are no longer admitted. The government and the Dublin ſociety afford ſupport, and give bounties, but on condition that no excluſive privilege is aſked. The moſt magnificent, as well as the moſt certain, means of poſſeſſing every thing nature beſtows is freedom, SIRE. It is the prodigality with which ſhe beſtows that attracts men, by moral feeling and phyſical good. All excluſive grants wound the firſt, and baniſh the ſecond.

I intreat, SIRE, you would remark that I do not propoſe you ſhould ſuddenly, and incautiouſly, lop away all the paraſite ſuckers which disfigure and enfeeble the royal ſtock which you were born to embelliſh and ſtrengthen; but I likewiſe conjure you not to be impeded by the fear of meeting your collectors with empty hands; for this fear, being ſolely occupied concerning ſelf, they will not fail to increaſe. The only man among them who really poſſeſſes an extenſive knowledge of the general connections of commerce, and from whom you may expect able ſervices, whenever your ſyſtem ſhall invariably be directed to obtain other purpoſes than thoſe to which his talents have hitherto been proſtituted, STRUENSEE, will confirm all my principles. He will indicate various means to your Majeſty, which may ſerve as ſubſtitutes to fiſcal extortions. Thus, for inſtance, the commutation of duties, which is a new art, may, under the direction of a man ſo enlightened, greatly increaſe your revenues, by lightening the public burthen.

' England, formed to afford leſſons to the whole earth, and to aſtoniſh the human mind by demonſtrating the infinite reſources of credit, in ſupport of which every thing is made to concur; England has lately made a fine and fortunate experiment of this kind. She has commuted the duties on tea by a tax on windows, and the ſucceſs is wonderful (*m*). Acquire a clear knowledge of this operation, SIRE. It is preſerved, with all the effects it has produced, in a work which will open vaſt proſpects to your view. Your generalizing mind will take confidence in the induſtry of the honeſt man, and in the reſources of his ſenſibility, aided by experience and talents; though the misfortune of heavy taxes and the vicious mode of aſſeſſment ſhould neceſſarily be prolonged.

But, SIRE, were you obliged to accept that heavy intereſt which powers in debt are obliged to pay, as a ſubſtitute for duties that though deſtructive are not commutable, where would be the misfortune? What advantage might not reſult from treaſures employed to obtain the payment of intereſt by which monarchies the moſt formidable are en-

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(*m*) Wonderful indeed! T.

feebled? Wherefore not ſeize the means which they themſelves furniſh at their own expence, no longer to ſtand in awe of them? Do not you perceive, SIRE, that you would thus without danger make them pay you tribute? For the governments which might be mad enough to wiſh to rob their creditors would be unable, thanks to the general intercourſe of trade.

It remains to enquire to whom you would confide labours ſo difficult, yet ſo intereſting. It is not for a ſtranger to eſtimate the worth of your ſubjects. Yet, SIRE, is there one whoſe talents are eſteemed in France and England, and him therefore I may venture to name. Baron Knyphauſen is well acquainted with men and things, in thoſe countries in which he has ſerved; and particularly with the ſyſtem of the public funds.

But more eſpecially, SIRE, ſummon the merchants. Among them are moſt commonly found probity and abilities. From them is derived the theory of order; and without order what can be accompliſhed? They are in general men of moderation, diveſted of pomp, and for that reaſon merit preference. Be perſuaded, SIRE, that the moſt enlightened, the moſt wiſe, and the moſt humane of mankind, would depart from you were their reward to conſiſt in the vain decorations which titles beſtow. Theſe cannot be accepted without trampling on principles to which men are indebted for the glory of having merited reward; nor without paying with contempt the claſs they honour. The merchant who is worthy of your confidence will dread making himſelf guilty of ſuch ingratitude toward his equals; and this is one of the characteriſtics by which he will be diſtinguiſhed. In the title of Lord Chatham the great Pitt expired; nor did the Lord ever conſole himſelf for having acted thus traiterouſly toward his own glory. The ſervices of the merchants you may employ, far from multiplying, muſt deſtroy the monſtrous inequalities which diſorganize and deform your ſtates. Thus will men like theſe find their reward, and not in ſilly titles, or the vain decorations of nobility.

But, SIRE, I have too long intruded upon the precious moments in which the ſceptre has ſo lately been confided to your hands. What can I add which your own reflections, increaſed by facts that daily muſt fall under your notice, will not convey a thouſand times more forcibly than any words of mine can? I have imagined it might not be wholly fruitleſs to awaken theſe ideas, at the moment of a change ſo new, under a variety of affairs ſo great, and a multitude of intereſts and intrigues which muſt traverſe and combat each other round your throne, and which may deprive you of that calm of mind that is neceſſary to abſtract and to ſelect. Should you, in any degree, be affected by my frankneſs, I dare hope it will not be unpleaſantly. Meditate, OH, FREDERIC! on this *free*, ſincere, but reſpectful remonſtrance, and deign to ſay—

"Here I find what no man has in-"formed me of, and perhaps the reverſe

" of what I ſhall be daily told. The moſt " courageous preſent truth to kings under a veil; I here behold her naked.— " This is more worthy of me than the " venal incenſe of rhymers, with which I " am ſuffocated; or academical panegyrics, which aſſaulted me in the " cradle, and ſcarcely will quit me in " the coffin. I was a man before I was " a king. Wherefore then take offence " at being treated like a man; or becauſe " a ſtranger, who aſks nothing from me, " and who ſoon will quit my court, never " to behold it more, ſpeaks to me without diſguiſe? He lays before me what " inſpection, experience, ſtudy, and underſtanding have collected. He gratis " gives me that true and liberal advice " of which no man ſtands ſo much in " need as he who is devoted to the " public good. Intereſt to deceive me " he has none; his intentions cannot " be evil.—Let me attentively examine " what he has propoſed; for the ſimple " good ſenſe, the native candour of the " man whoſe only employment is the

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"cultivation of reaſon, and reflection, "may well be of equal value with the "old routine of habit, artifice, forms, "diplomatic chimeras, and the ridicu"lous dogmas of thoſe who are ſtateſ"men by trade."

May the eternal Diſpoſer of human events watch over your welfare; may your days be beneficent and active; employed in thoſe conſolatory duties which elevate and fortify the ſoul; and may you, till the extremeſt old age, enjoy the pure felicity of having employed your whole faculties for the proſperity of the people, for whoſe happineſs you are reſponſible, for to you their happineſs is intruſted!

THE END.

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